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THE

PERPETUAL BIRTHING

AND

WATCH BILL BOOK,

BY WHICH

The moſt tedious Part of birthing a Ship's Company may be performed as well before ſhe is manned as after, and Officers be materially aſſiſted in fulfilling a very troubleſome Part of their Duty.

WITH AN

ENGRAVED PLAN

OF THE

BETWEEN-DECKS OF A SEVENTY-FOUR GUN-SHIP,
Divided into ſleeping and meſſing Places.

By D. ROSS, Master in the Royal Navy.

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LITTLE TOWER-HILL.

1797.

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The above arrangement agrees neareſt with the order of the watch-bill, and the hammocks ſtow neareſt that part of the ſhip the men are watched at. Thoſe ordered to be ſtowed in the tops and rigging may be placed on the gangway inſide of the netting, until ordered to their proper places.

TO

CAPTAIN JAMES DOUGLAS,

OF THE

ROYAL NAVY.

SIR,

I Have to acknowledge my obligations to you for the pains you took in giving the PERPETUAL BIRTHING-BOOK a fair trial, and for your kind attention to myſelf, in his majeſty's ſhip JASON, when under your command; on-board of which I remained, after your departure, a witneſs of the moſt inconteſtible proofs of that eſteem in which your exertions and humanity had cauſed you to be held by a crew of grateful ſeamen.

In the diſcipline of a ſhip's company there undoubtedly requires great judgement and humanity, which none have exerciſed with more ſolicitude than yourſelf: and twenty-five years experience has convinced me, that, were ſuch conduct general, the fleets of Great-Britain would ſeldom exhibit an example of mutiny.

I beg you, ſir, to accept my apology for taking the liberty to publiſh this ſmall tribute of gratitude and admiration, for your juſt and diſintereſted principles, without your permiſſion; which I am at too great a diſtance to obtain before my little performance will be publiſhed; which I do not with a view to any pecuniary advantage, but for the eaſe of the officer and comfort of the ſeaman.

With true reſpect and unalterable regard, I have the honour to be,

SIR,

Your obliged and moſt obedient,

Humble Servant,

Plymouth-Dock, April 1, 1796.

D. ROSS.

EXPLANATION OF, AND REMARKS ON,

THE

PERPETUAL BIRTHING-BOOK.

*** A REFERENCE TO THE ENGRAVED PLATE, WHICH ACCOMPANIES THIS WORK, WILL BE FOUND TO ELUCIDATE THE SUBJECT.

ON the head and margin of each page are printed its contents, by which an inſtant reference is obtained. The left-hand pages are for the larboard ſide, and the right-hand pages for the ſtarboard ſide. The three ruled columns are for,—firſt, the number of the birth; ſecondly, for larboard or ſtarboard watch; thirdly, the number of the tier. L. and S. in the watch-column, ſhould be inſerted alternately, beginning with L. on the larboard, and S. on the ſtarboard, watch; which will aſſiſt in mixing the ſhip's company more exactly, when at watch and watch, and point out the watch they belong to: becauſe, if thoſe who belong to the larboard watch are birthed on the ſtarboard ſide, and are oppoſite to the letter L. on that ſide, it is certain they are properly mixed; and, when one watch is on deck, each man in the other will have two men's room, the empty hammocks excepted. This rule reverſed will ſerve for the larboard ſide.

In

In the middle of each leaf are two narrow ſlips of parchment alternately interſected through cuts from top to bottom, which form nooſes for ſlips of paper to be run through, on which are written the names of the crew, to correſpond with the figures that denote their ſituation. Theſe ſlips of paper, with the men's names, may be changed whenever required without the leaſt inconvenience; only minding to give the men the patch correſponding with the number removed to.

The invariable mode, in dock-yards, is to batten the beams on both ſides and fix one between each beam; which method creates much confuſion, and takes nearly twice the quantity of ſtuff more than the one offered; it conſequently occaſions more labour, a greater expence, harbours dirt, and muſt be altered before the crew can be regularly birthed.

By the following method, birthing a ſhip's company may be performed with great eaſe to the officer, and with ſuch regularity that every man can claim his birth without the leaſt diſpute.

Firſt, the ſhip ſhould be battened agreeably to the plan on the *plate*, and if at firſt in dock the better. The battens to be nailed or ſcrewed on the beams or carlings three feet from each other, excepting the foremoſt and aftermoſt, which ſhould be ſix feet. The hammocks will then lock eighteen inches within each other, (the proper length of the clues,) and the whole range from clue to clue, ſuppoſing the hammock ſix, will be nine feet. The firſt head-batten being nine feet from the foremoſt one, a locking batten three feet before it will come between, and every other or ſecond batten will be a head one. Every part ſhould be meaſured where men are to be ſtowed, and the length from the manger to the gunroom divided into tiers of ſix feet, excepting the firſt, which ſhould be nine. Let the tiers be marked off in large characters on the underſide of the beam or carling, a little before the head batten, beginning with N° I forward on both ſides, and an exact breadth be given to each birth according to the number of men and their ſtations. Should the ſhip meaſure more than the regular longers between decks, the ſpare ſpace ſhould be given to the forepart of the ſhip, that part being much confined, and the moſt uſeful men being birthed in the foremoſt tiers.

Room

Room ſhould be left for the petty officers in their uſual places, marked with their ſtations, and their hammocks marked in the ſame way, to prevent their being mixed with the people's on deck.

As moſt of the numbered inſide births are for the captains of the different parts of the ſhip they ſhould not be pinched.

The number of hammocks that can be ſtowed in the nettings on deck ſhould be aſcertained; and, when the whole is meaſured, and marked with the proper diſtribution of room, ſmall patches or pieces of canvas, ſhould be made out for all the hammocks, marked as is mentioned hereafter. One of theſe pieces, correſponding with the birthing-book, where every man's birth appears oppoſite his name, is delivered to each man ſo ſoon as birthed, to be ſewed on his reſpective hammock, and to be changed, when it is thought proper to remove him.

It is an advantage for hammocks always to be ſtowed in the ſame place; therefore the numbers ſhould be regulated by the ſize of the nettings and the height the officer will have the hammocks ſtowed. This ſhould be aſcertained before the patches are made.

Petty officers' hammocks are placed at diſcretion in the ſtarboard and larboard fore-rigging.

When it is known what room may be allowed to each man, the births ſhould be numbered, and the numbers ſhould begin at a convenient diſtance, from the ſide on the firſt head-batten, and then proceed from ſide to centre, from N° I upwards, until the whole are marked, making allowance for the muzzles of the guns, particularly in low ſhips.

Take care that the head clues are made faſt exactly to the centre of their reſpective numbers.

The plan of between-decks will aſſiſt the officer in giving every man a place to meſs in by ſimply dividing each tier into two meſs-places, with the addition of the vacant ſpaces in midſhips.

EXAMPLES

EXAMPLES FOR MARKING THE PATCHES OR CANVAS PIECES;

WITH AN EXPLANATION OF THE ABBREVIATIONS.

There are two ſorts of patches neceſſary: the firſt for thoſe who ſleep between decks, containing the initials of the place their hammocks are to be ſtowed in on deck, and the number of the tier they occupy between decks; thus:

SFC. N° 1 T—I	Starboard Forecaſtle, N° 1, Tier I.

The ſecond ſort for perſons who do not ſleep between decks, ſuch as quarter-maſters, quarter-gunners, boys, and idlers, containing the initials of the place in which their hammocks ſtow, the number of their birth, and deſcription of perſons: thus

SMR. N° 1 Qr. Mrs.	Starboard Main Rigging, N° 1, Quarter Maſters.
LMR. N° 1 Qr. Grs.	Larboard Main Rigging, N° 1, Quarter Gunners.
S. Gy. N° 1 Boys	Starboard Gangway, N° 1, Boys.
L. Gy. N° 1 Idlers	Larboard Gangway, N° 1, Idlers.
SFR. N° 1 Bts. Mates	Starboard Fore Rigging, N° 1, Boatſwain's Mates.
LFR. N° 1 Carps Mates	Larboard Fore Rigging, N° 1, Carpenter's Mates.

CONTRACTIONS EXPLAINED.

P. Poop.—F. C. Forecaſtle.—F. T. Fore-Top.—M. T. Main-Top. Q. D. Quarter-Deck.—Q. D. B. Quarter Deck Breaſt.—Gy. Gangway.—Mz. T. Mizen-Top.—M. R. Main Rigging.—P. B. Poop Breaſt.—Mz. R. Mizen Rigging.—B. & I. Boys and Idlers.—F. R. Fore Rigging.

FORM FOR MESSING THE CREW OF A SEVENTY-FOUR GUN SHIP.

DIVISIONS OF MESS-PLACES.	N° of Tier.	Petty Officers Births, Larboard.	Messes.	Petty Officers Births, in Midships.	N° of odd Messs	Petty Officers Births, Starboard.	Messes.
This Space contains 150 Forecastle Men, Fore and Main Topmen, and has 26 Mess-Places; which allow 5 Men to 6 & 6 Men to 20 Messes.	1		1 & 2				3 & 4
	2	Capt. of Forecastle.	5 & 6	Capt. of Maintop.	7	Capt. of Forecastle.	8 & 9
	3	Capt. of Foretop.	10 & 11			Capt. of Foretop.	12 & 13
	4		15 & 16	Capt. of Maintop.	14		17 & 18
	5	Ship's Cook.	19 & 20			Sailmaker.	21 & 22
	6		23 & 24			Master-at-Arms.	25 & 26
This Space contains 254 Petty Officers, Waisters, and Afterguard; and 49 Mess-Places, which allow 6 Men to 9 Messes and 5 Men to 40 Messes.	7	Ship's Corporal.	27 & 28				29 & 30
	8	Boatswain's Mate.	31 & 32		87	Boatswain's Mate.	33 & 34
	9		35 & 36				37 & 38
	10	Carpenter's Mate.	39 & 40			Carpenter's Mate.	41 & 42
	11		43 & 44				45 & 46
	12	Caulker.	47 & 48	Taylors.	86	Capt's. Coxswain.	49 & 50
	13	Capt. of the Mast.	51 & 52			Capt. of the Mast.	53 & 54
	14	Capt. Mizen Top.	55 & 56	Barbers.	85	Capt. of Mizentop.	57 & 58
	15	Capt. of Afterguard.	59 & 60		84		61 & 62
	16		63 & 64		83	Capt. of Afterguard.	65 & 66
	17		67 & 68				69 & 70
This Space contains 59 Marines, and has 12 Mess Places which allow 5 Men to 11 & 4 Men to 1 Mess.	18		71 & 72				73 & 74
	19	Serjeant of Marines.	75 & 76			Serjeant of Marines.	77 & 78
	20	Corporal of Marines.	79 & 80			Corporal of Marines.	81 & 82

In this Form, the most convenient Places between the Guns are picked out for Mess-Places

LARBOARD FORECASTLE NETTING.

FORE-CASTLE NETTING

Number.	Watch	Tier.				
I	L	I				

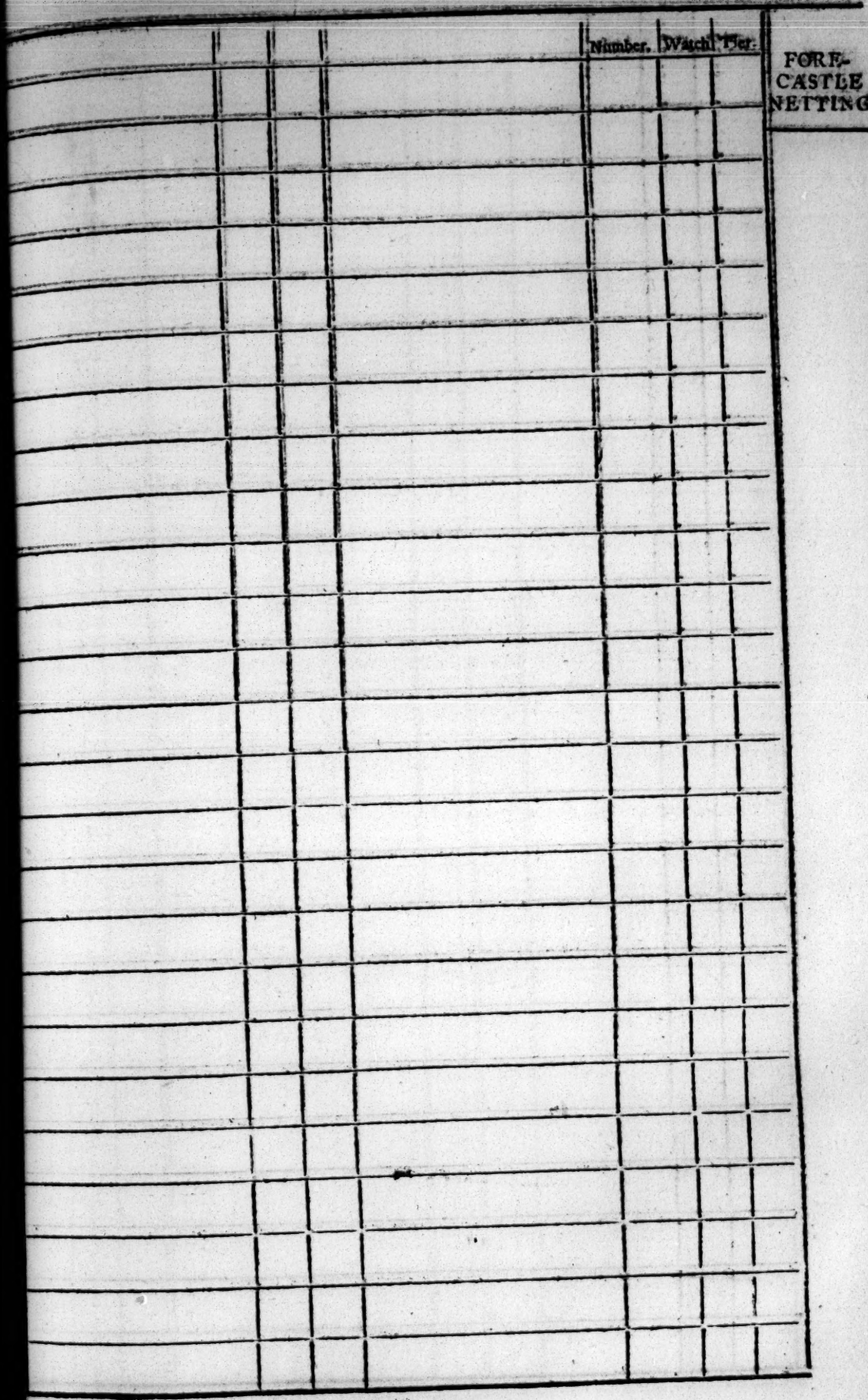
ber.	Watch	Tier.				
	S	I				

FORE-CASTLE NETTING

LARBOARD FORE-CASTLE NETTING.

FORE-CASTLE NETTING

				Number.	Watch.	Ti


Number.
Watch.
Tier.
FORE-CASTLE NETTING

LARBOARD FORE-TOP-MAST RIGGING.

FORE-TOPMAST RIGGING.

Number.	Watch	Tier.			

Number.	Watch.	Tier.	

FORE RIGGING.

				Number.	Watch

				Number.	Watch	Tier	
							FORE RIGGING.

MAIN RIGGING

Number.	Watch.	Tier.				

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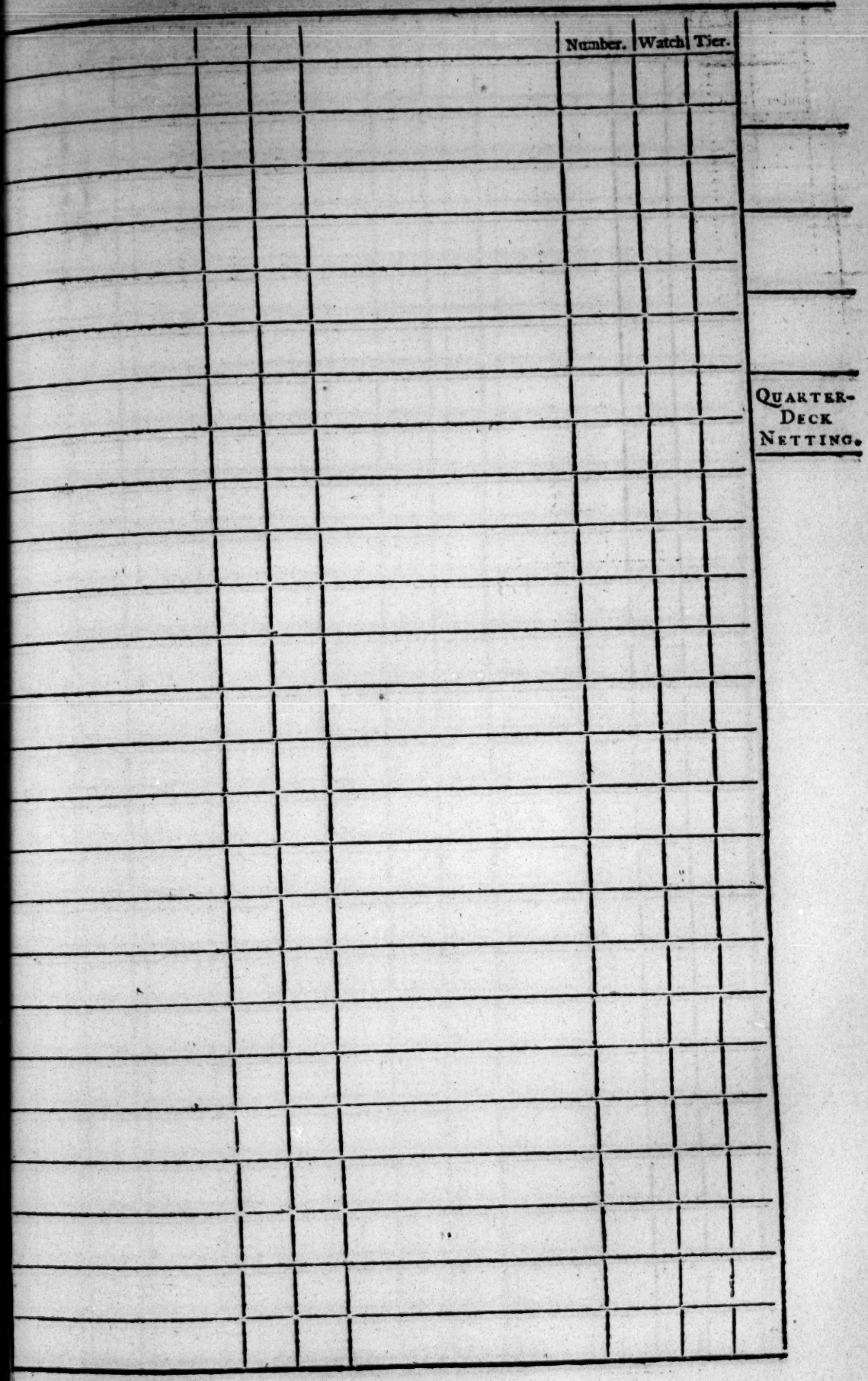
QUARTER-DECK NETTING.

				Number.	Watch	Tim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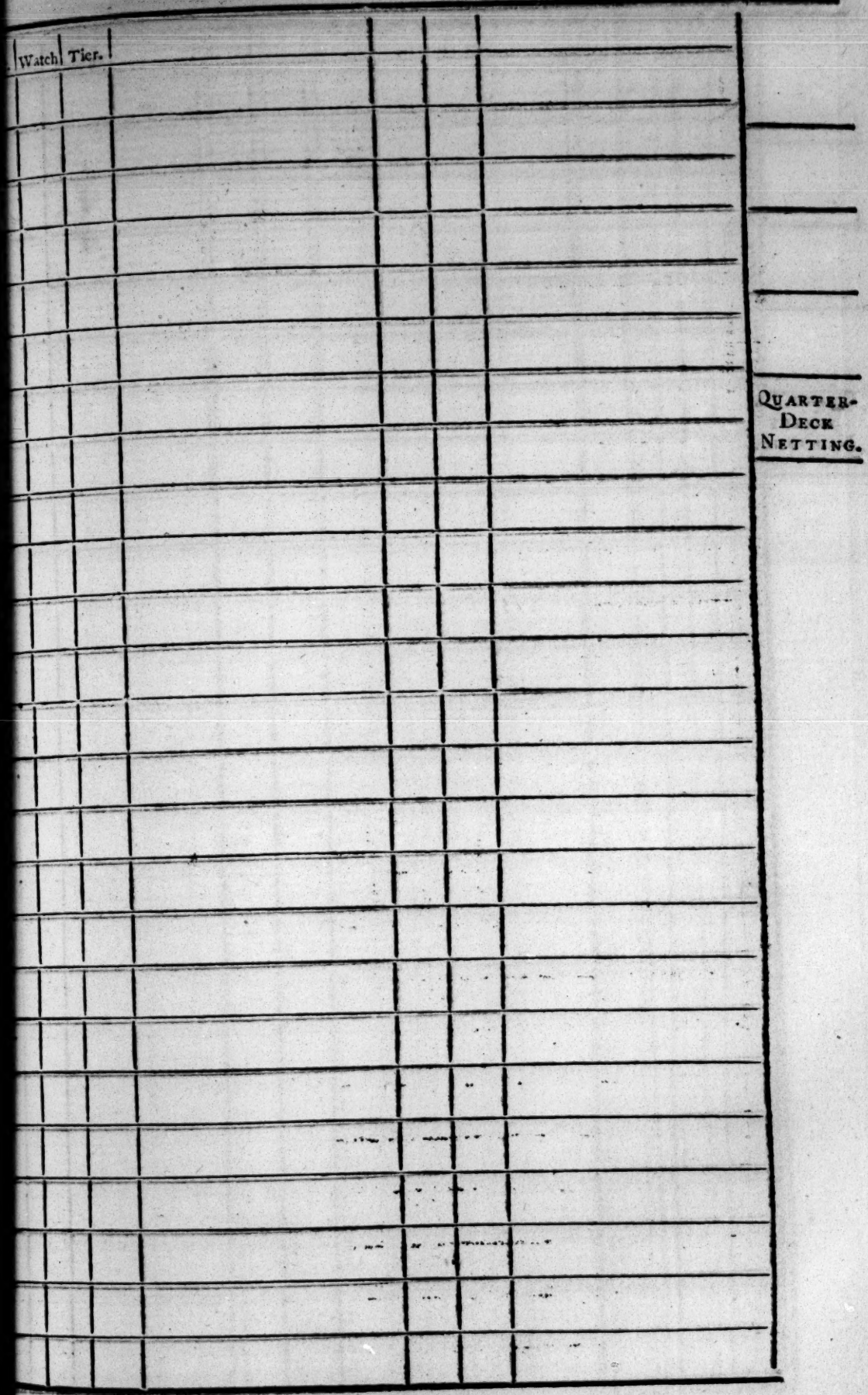
QUARTER-DECK NETTING.

Number.	Watch.	Tier.				


Watch
Tier.
QUARTER-DECK NETTING.

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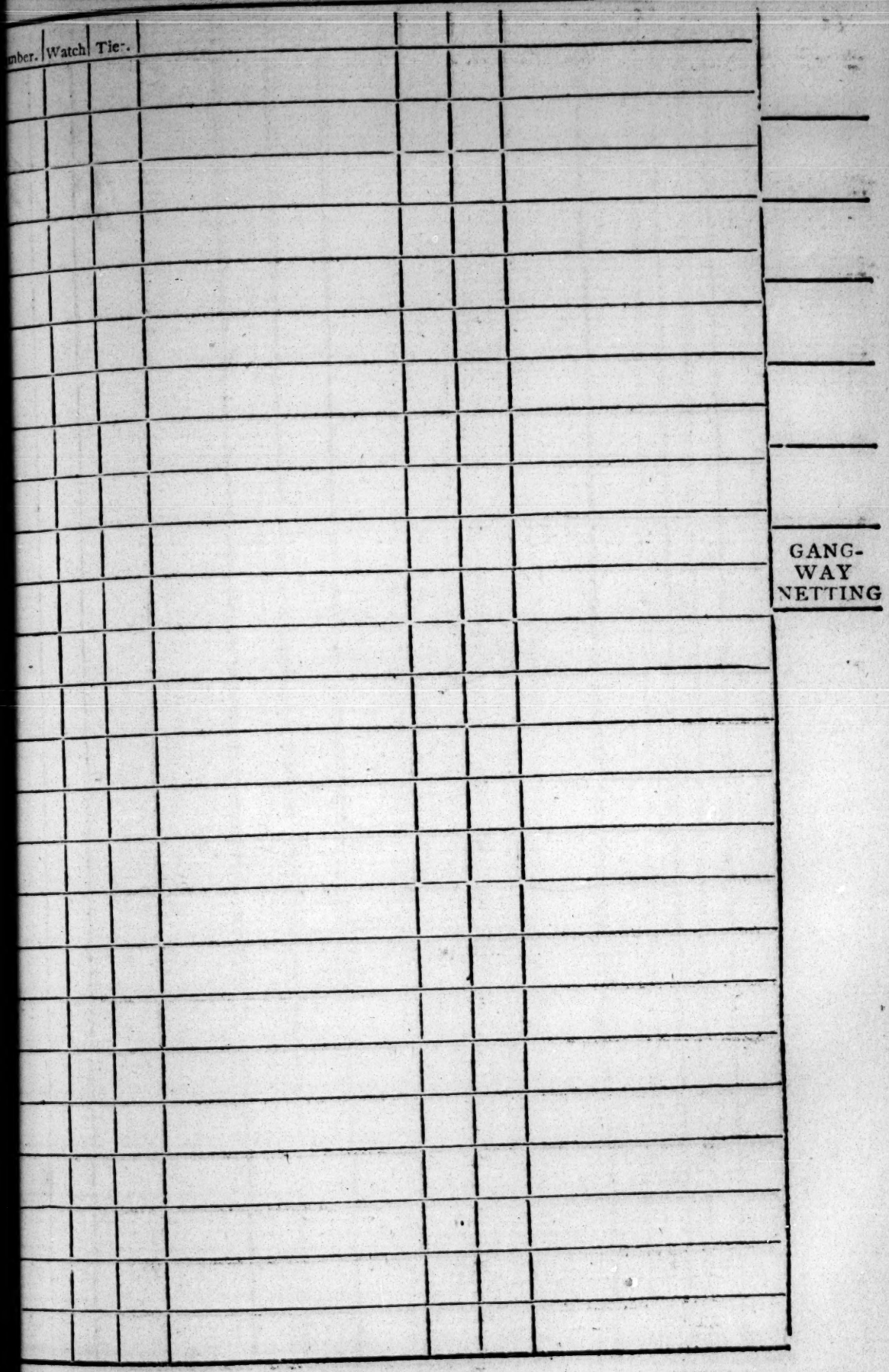
				Number.	Watch	Tier

GANG-WAY NETTING

Number.	Watch	Tier.				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NETTING

GANG-
WAY
NETTING

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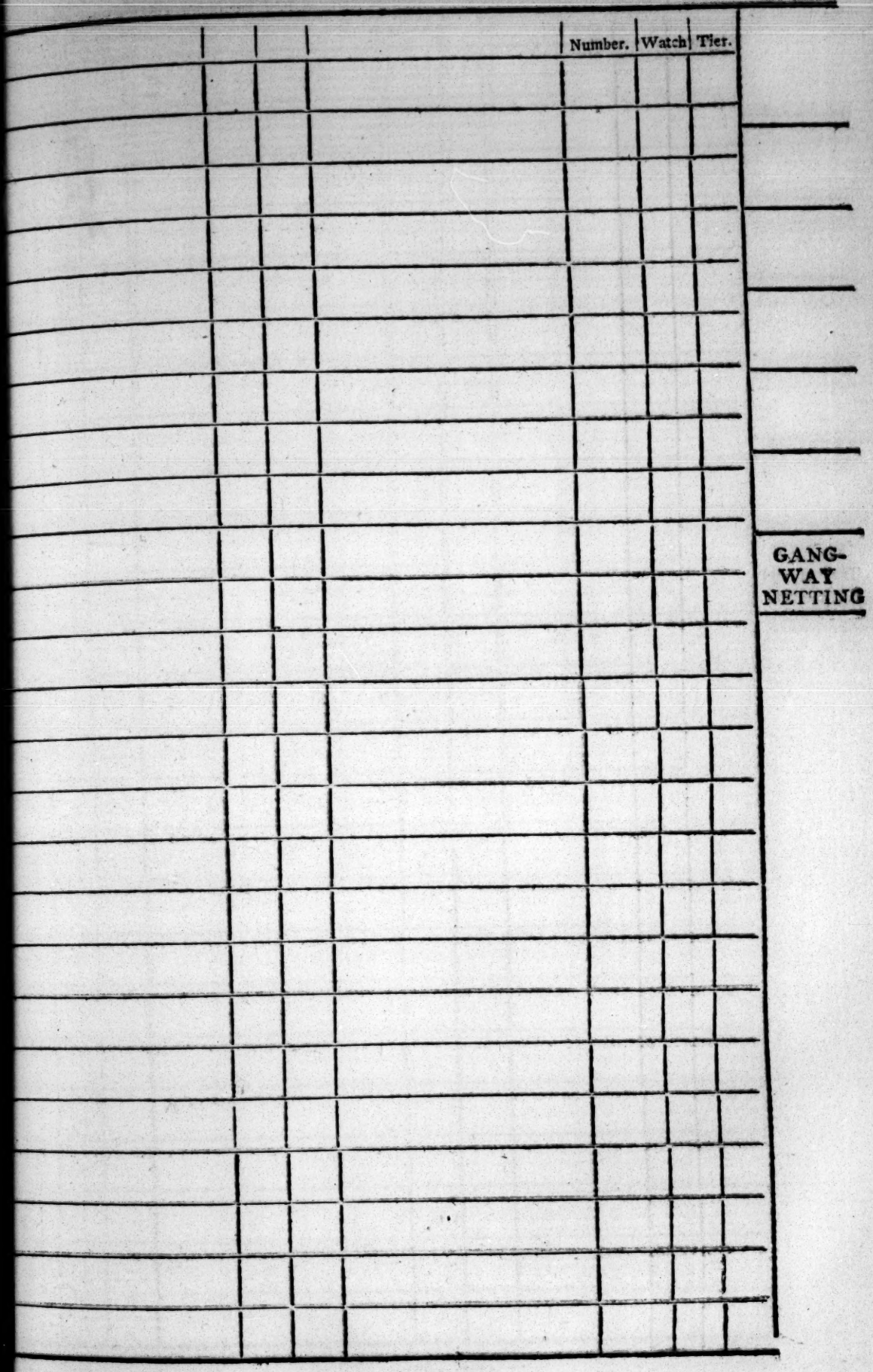
Number.
Watch
Tier.
GANG-
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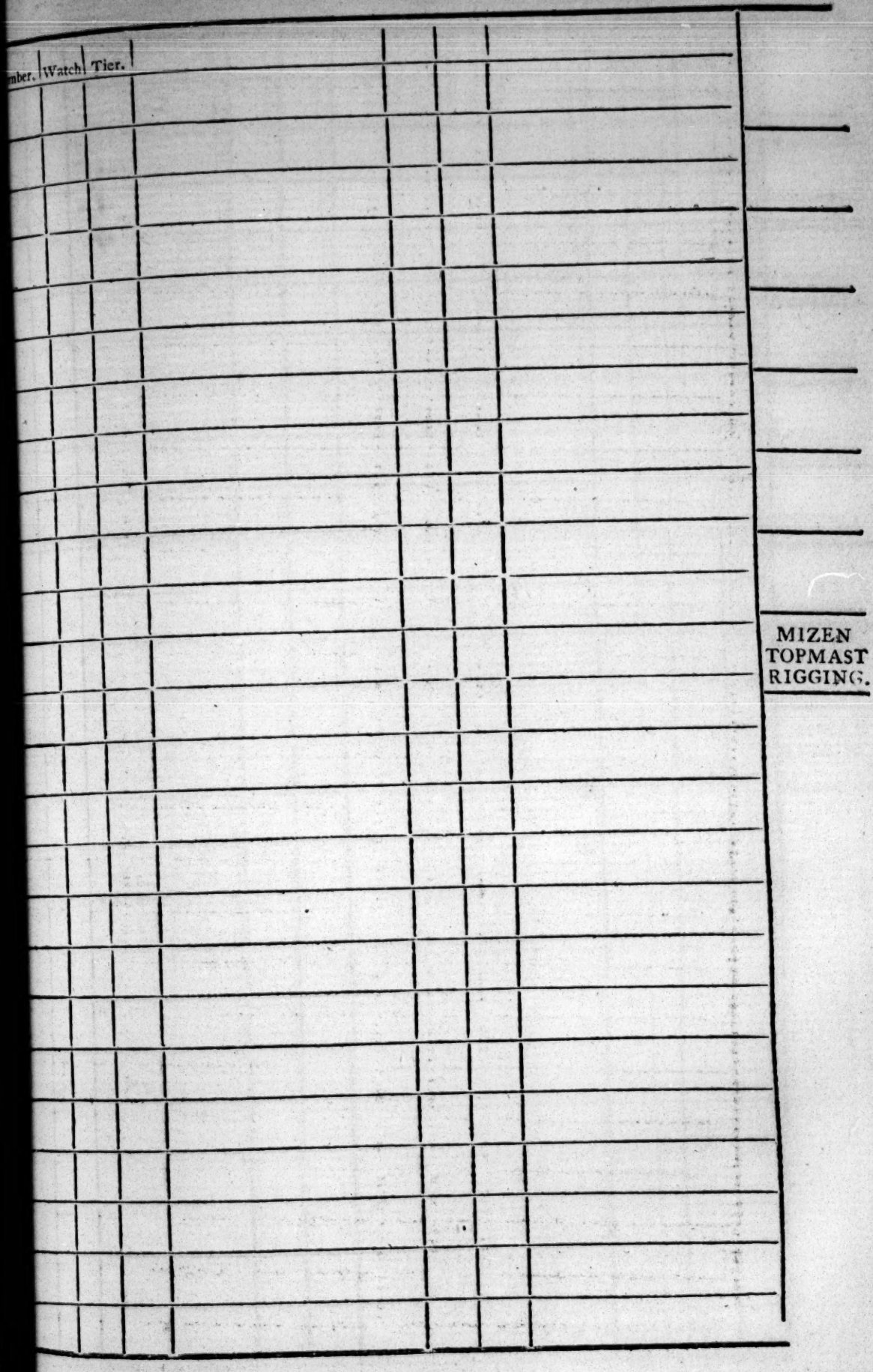
NETTING

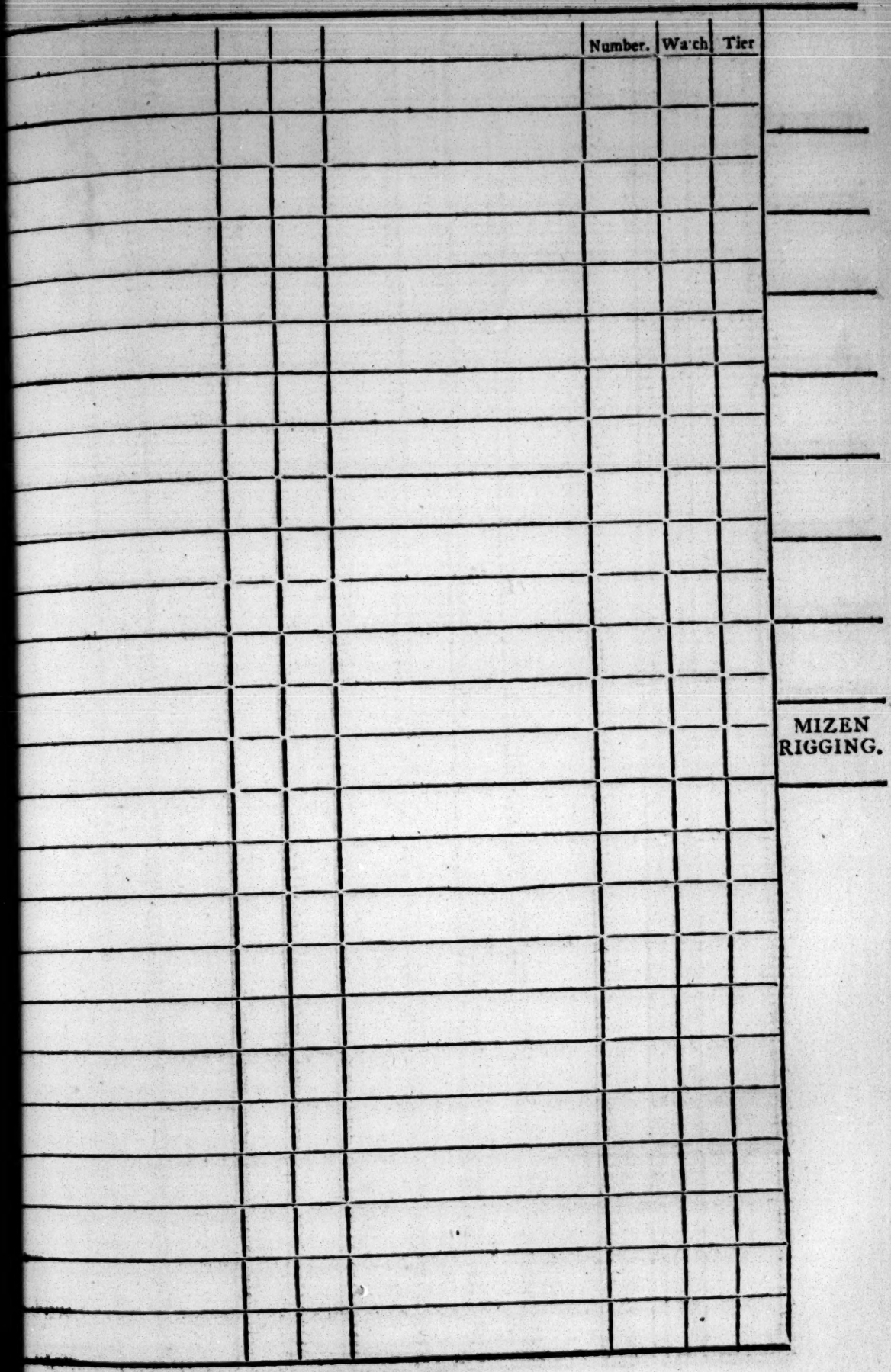
LARBOARD MIZEN-TOPMAST RIGGING.

Number.	Watch	Tier.				


mber. Watch. Tier.
MIZEN TOPMAST RIGGING.

MIZEN RIGGING.

				Number.	Watch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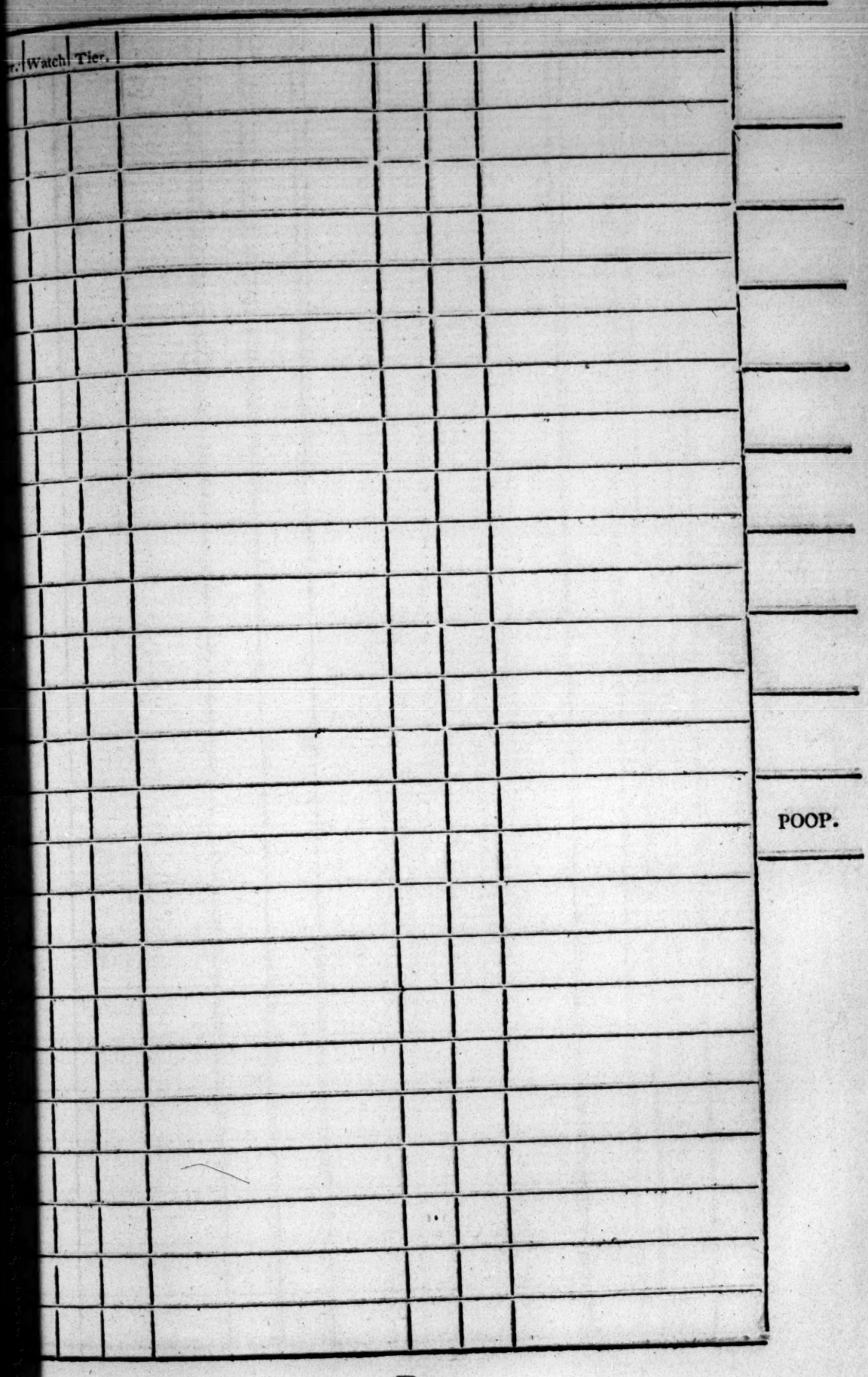
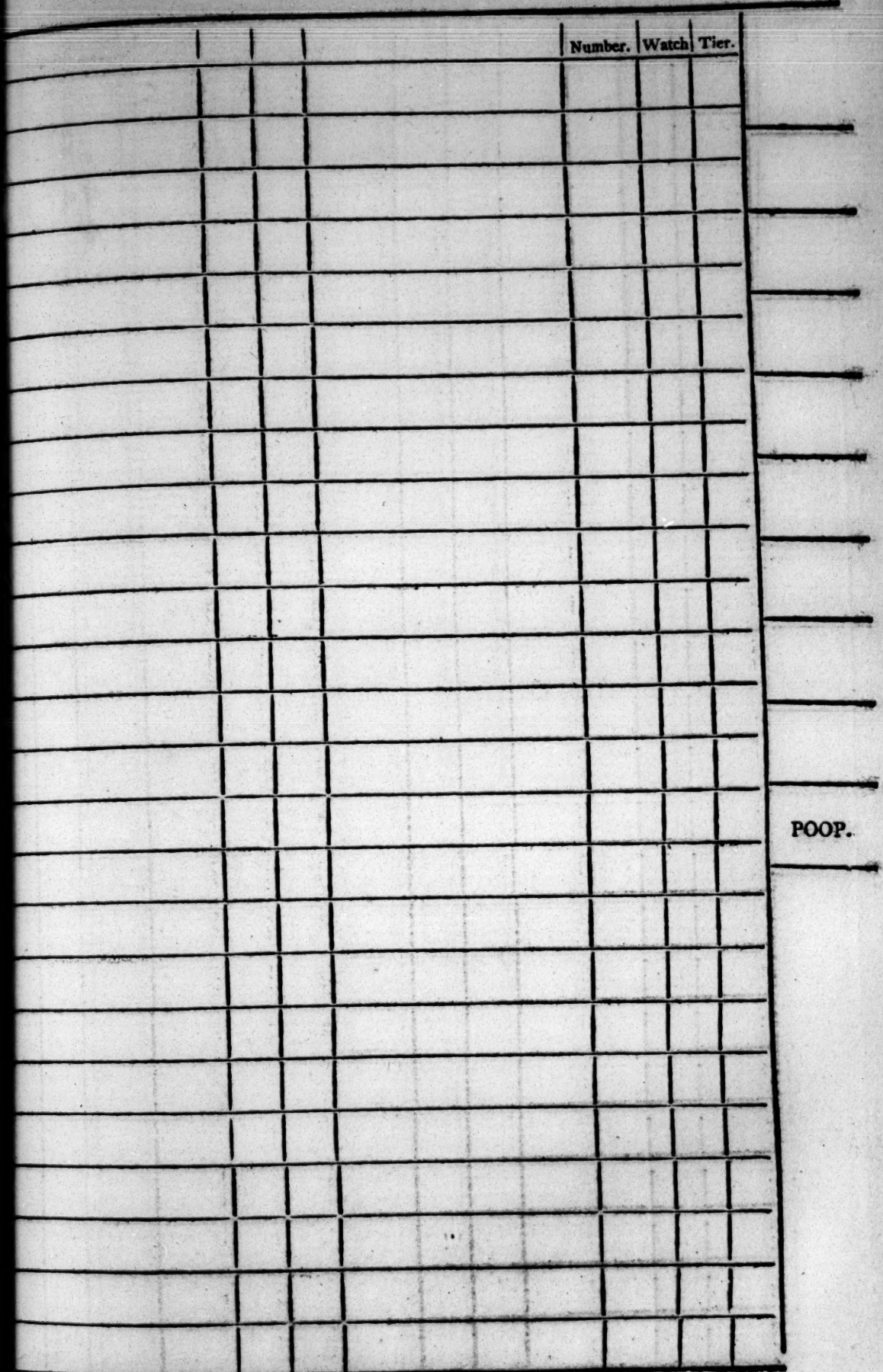
Number.	Watch	Tier.			


Watch Tier.
POOP.

					Number.	Watch	Tier
POOP.							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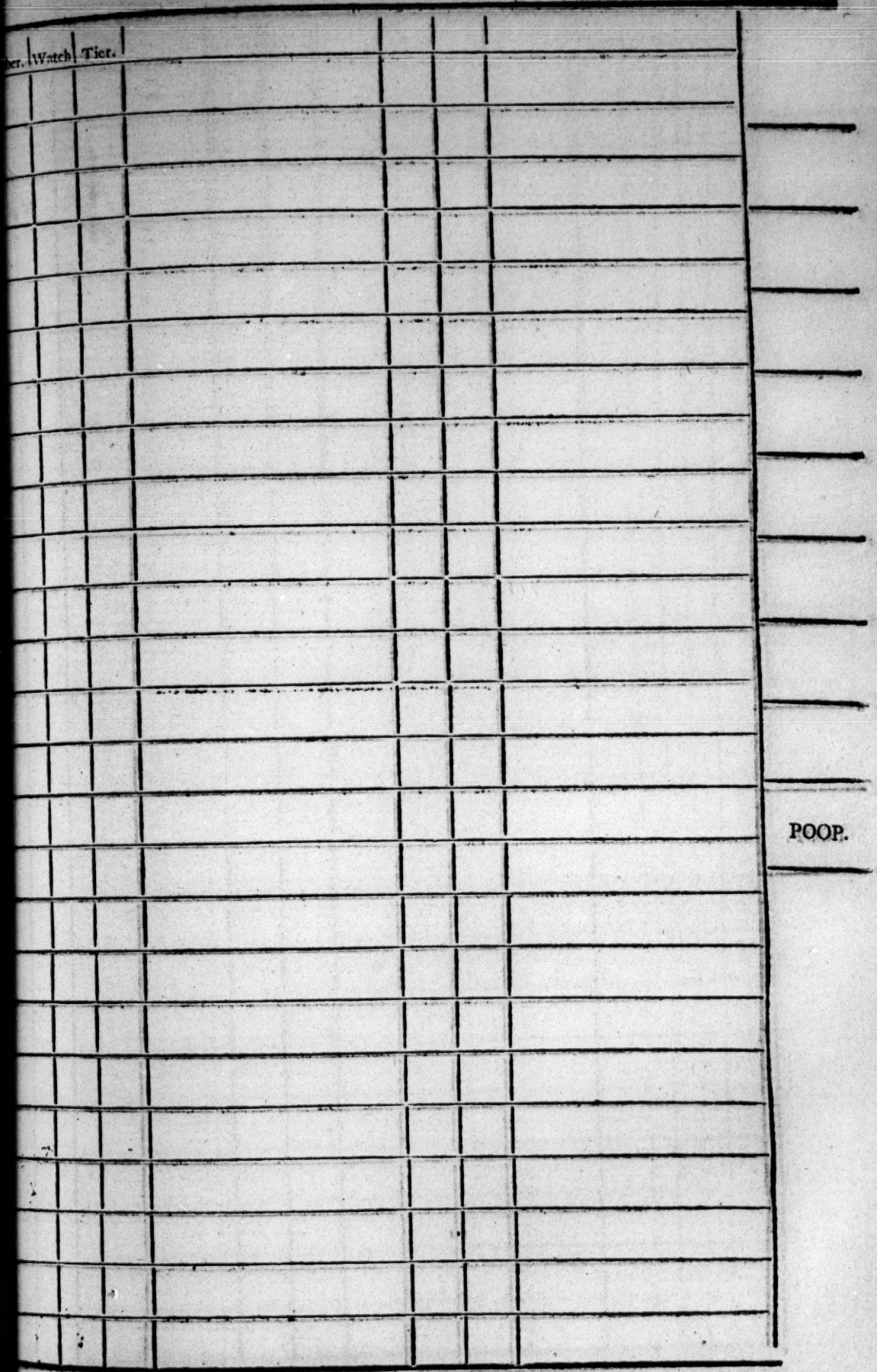
Number.	Watch.	Tier.				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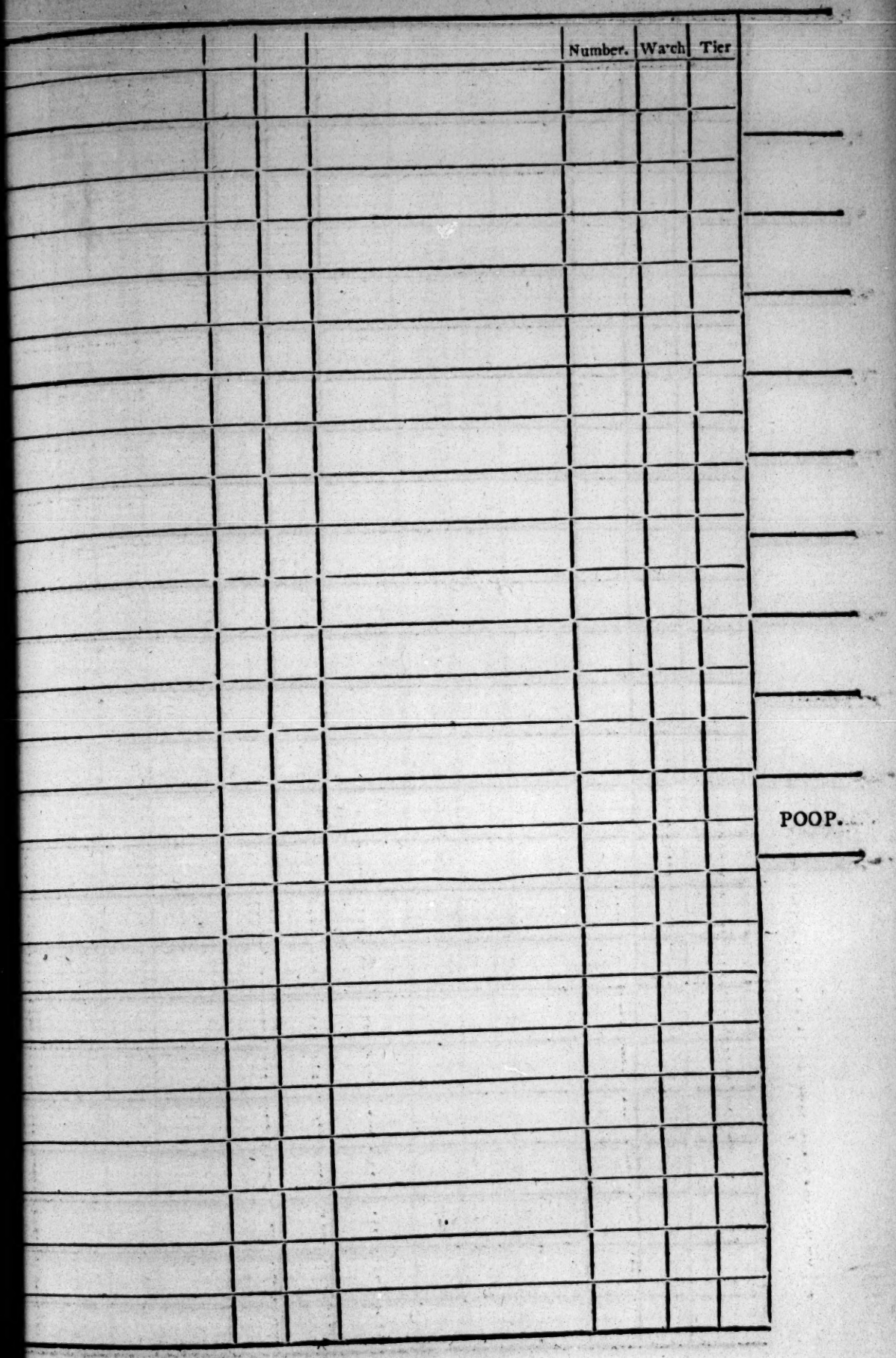
Number.
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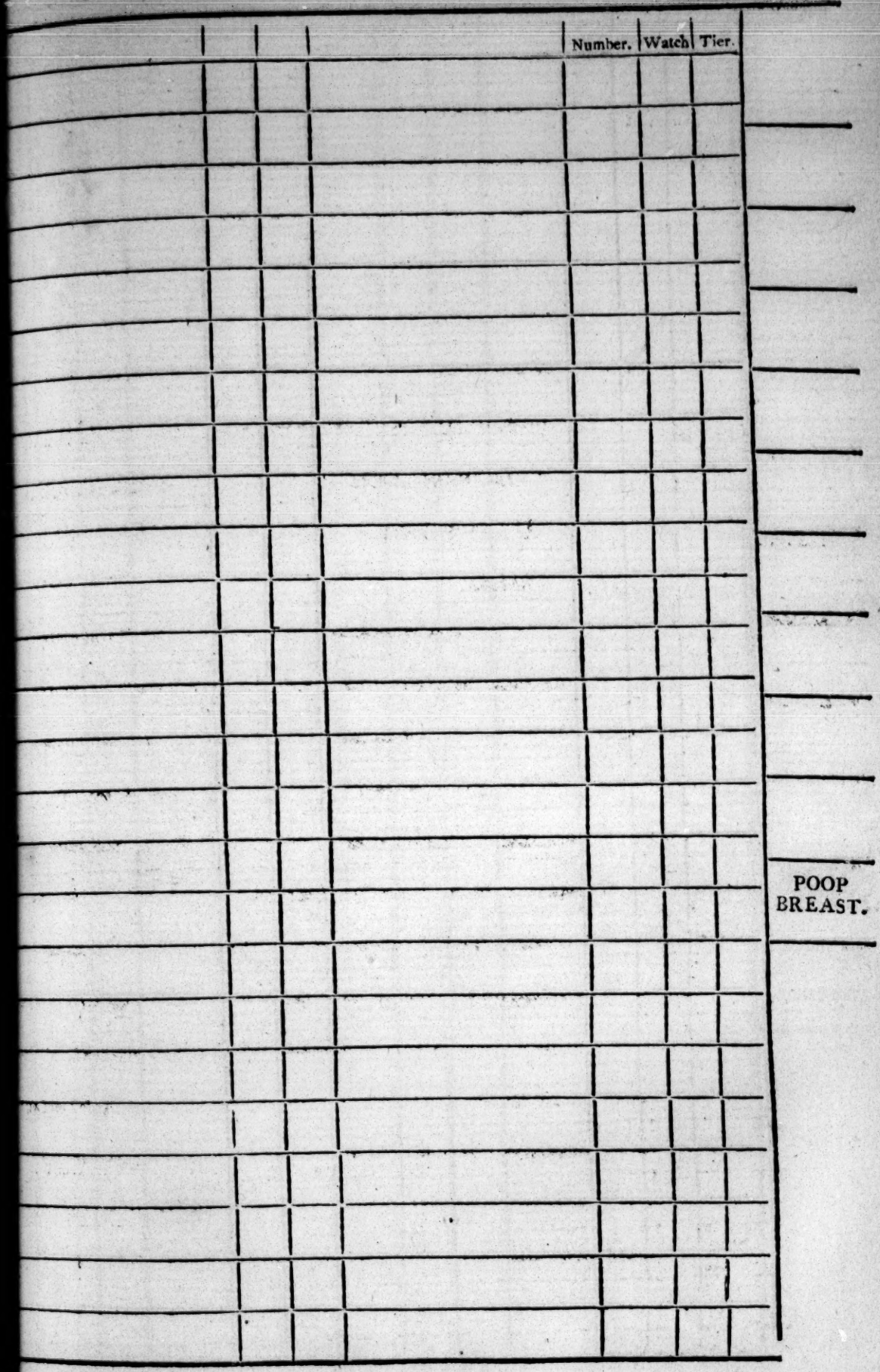
				Number.	Watch	
POOP BREAST.						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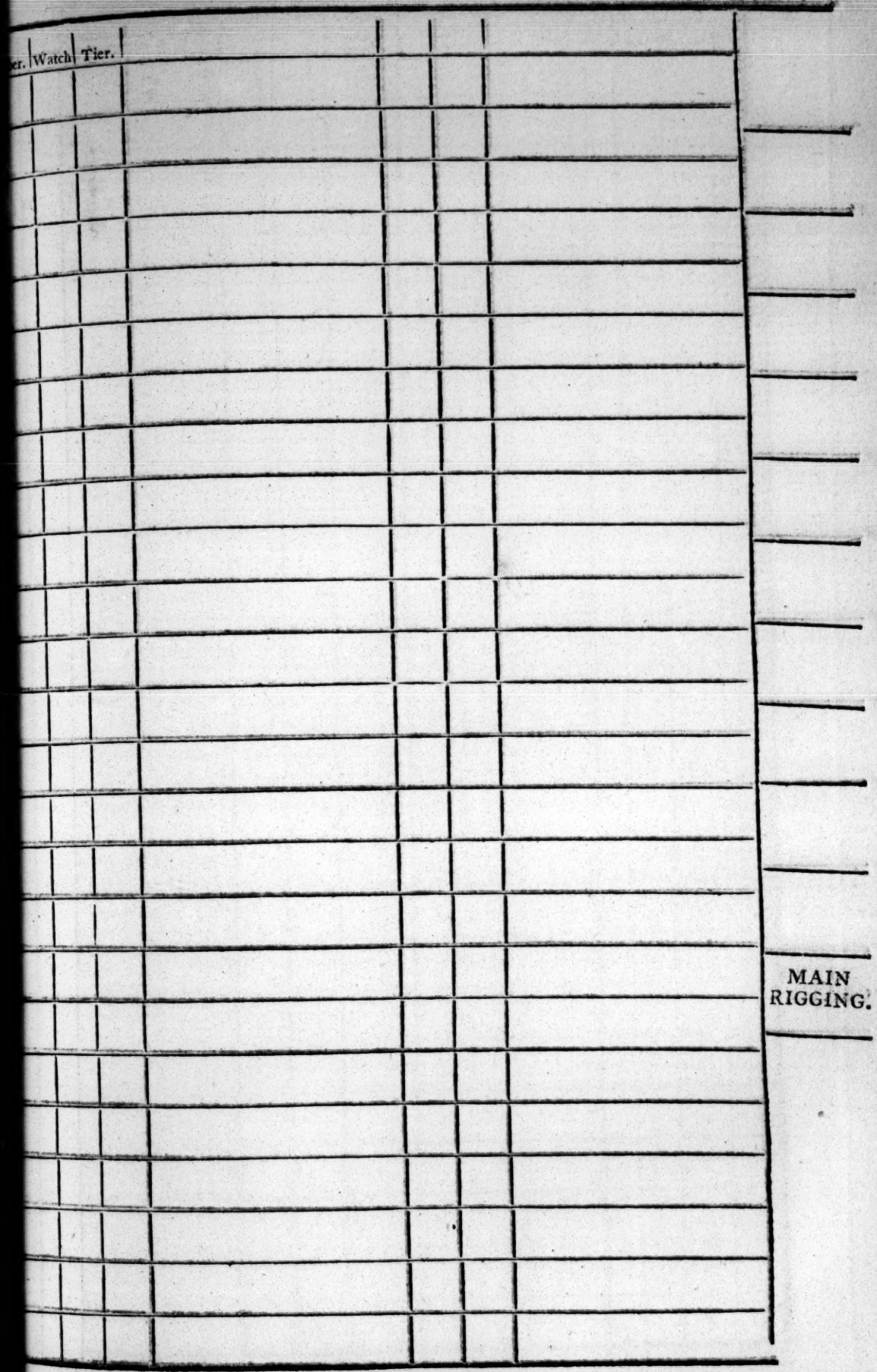
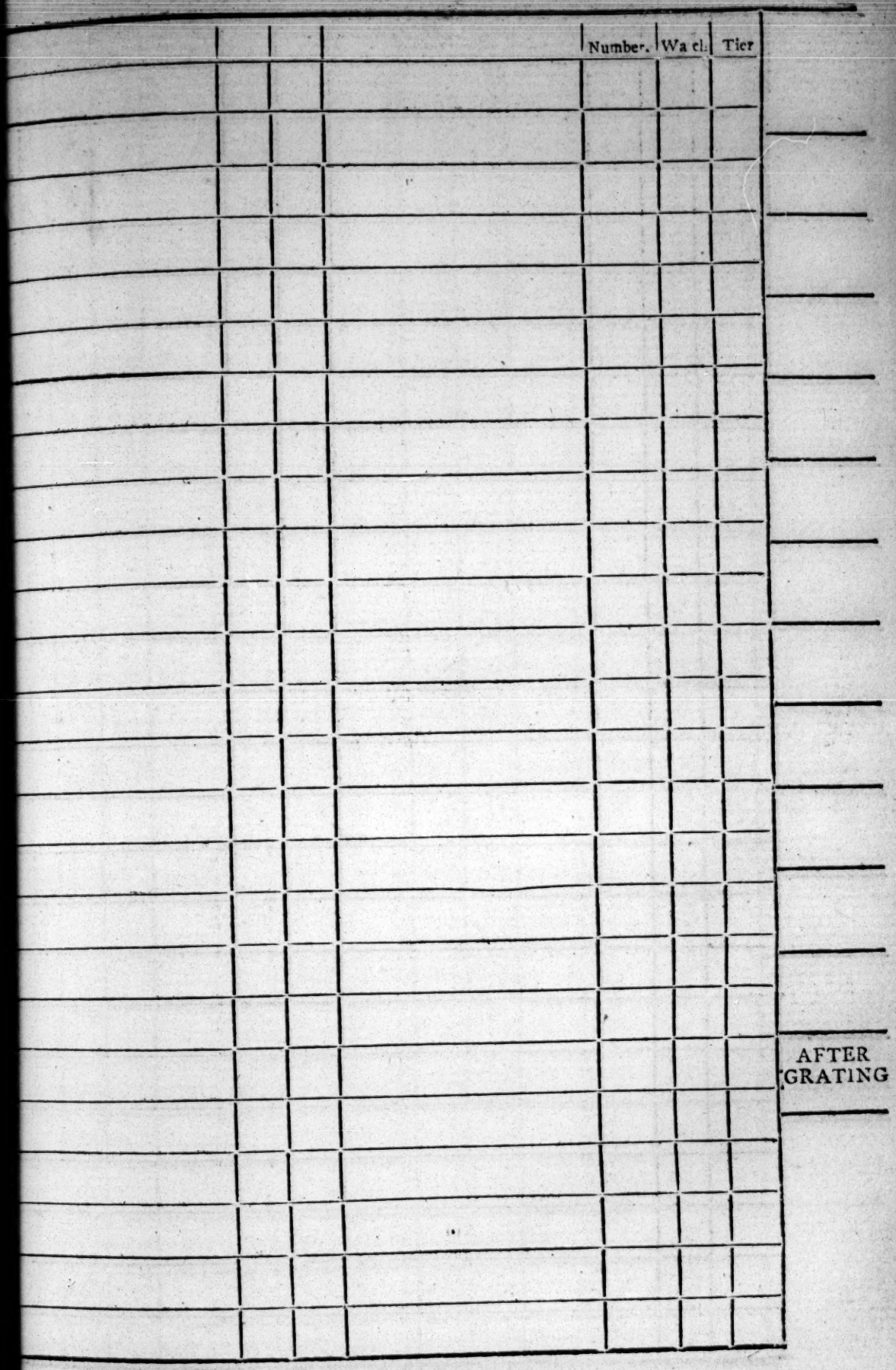
Number.	Watch.	Tier.				


er. Watch Tier.
MAIN
RIGGING.

					Number.	Watch	T
AFTER GRATING							

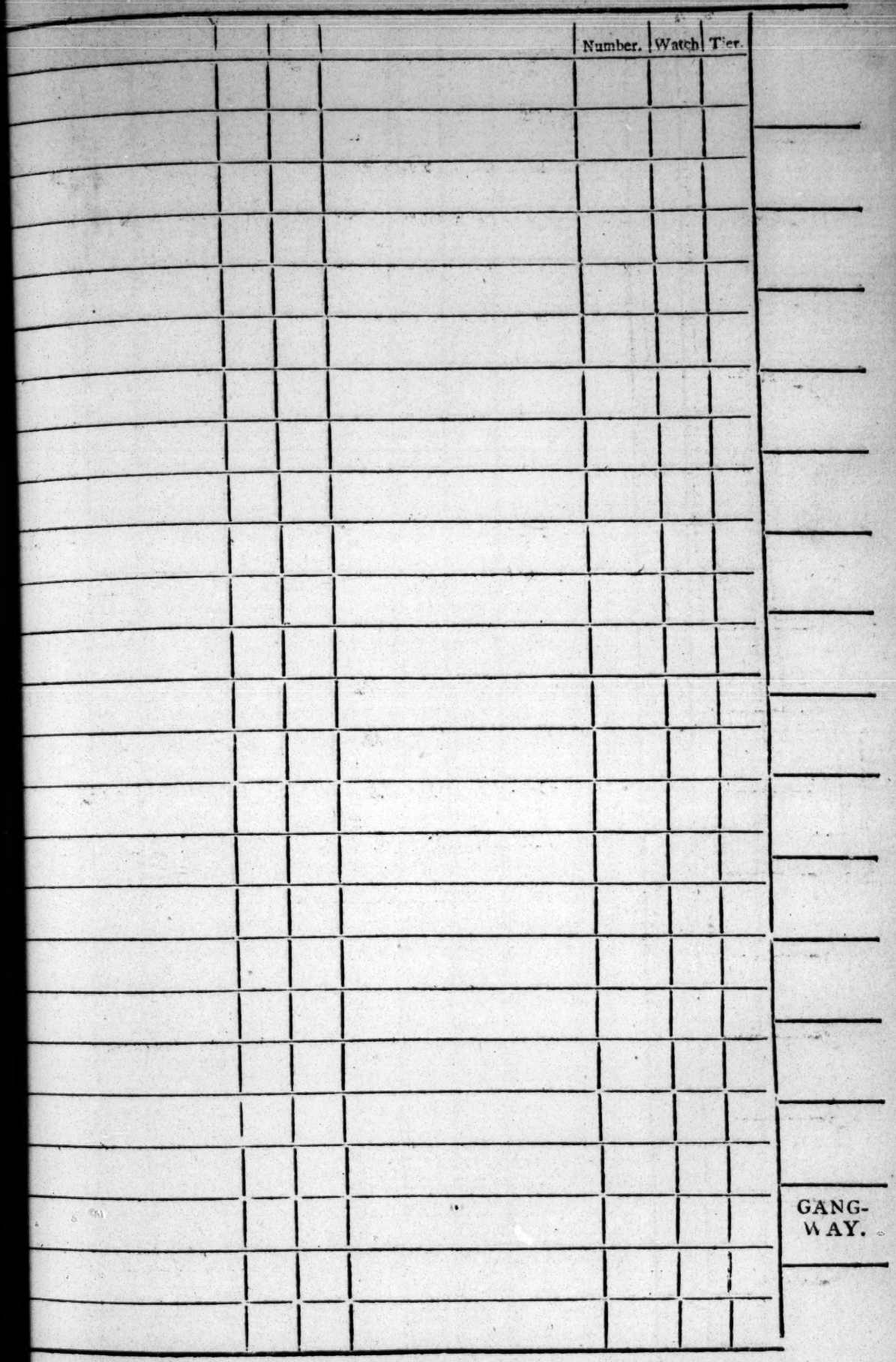

Number.
Watch
Tier
AFTER GRATING

LARBOARD MANGER.

Number.	Watch.	Tier.				

mber.	Watch	Tie-.				

				Number.	Watch	Tier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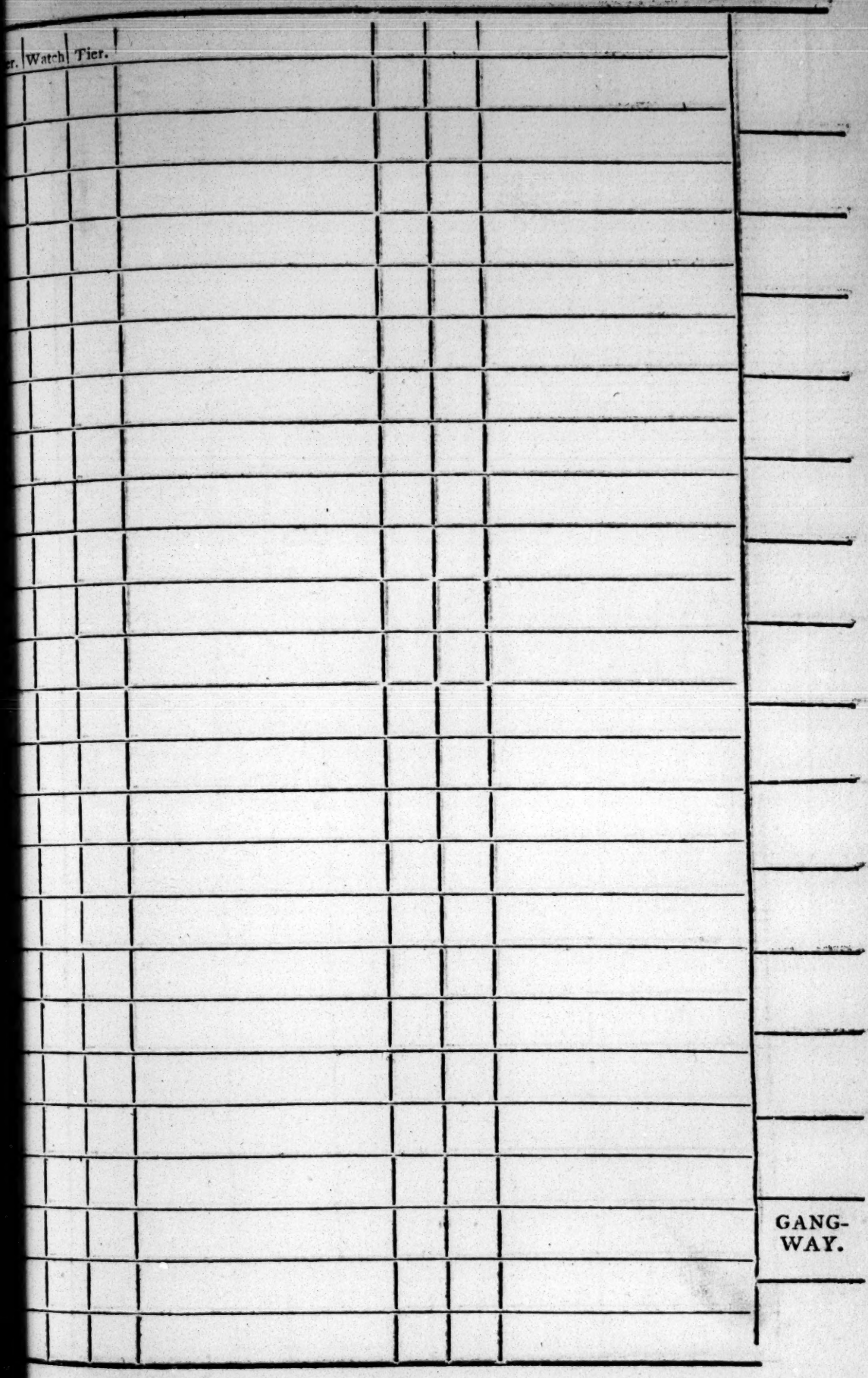
er. Watch Tier.
GANG-
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					Number.	Watch.	

GENTLEMEN.				

				GENTLE-MEN.

GENTLE-
MEN.

GENTLE-
MEN.

QUART. MASTERS

QUART. MASTERS.

BOATSW. MATES.

BOATSW. MATES.

GUNN. CREW.

GUNN. CREW.

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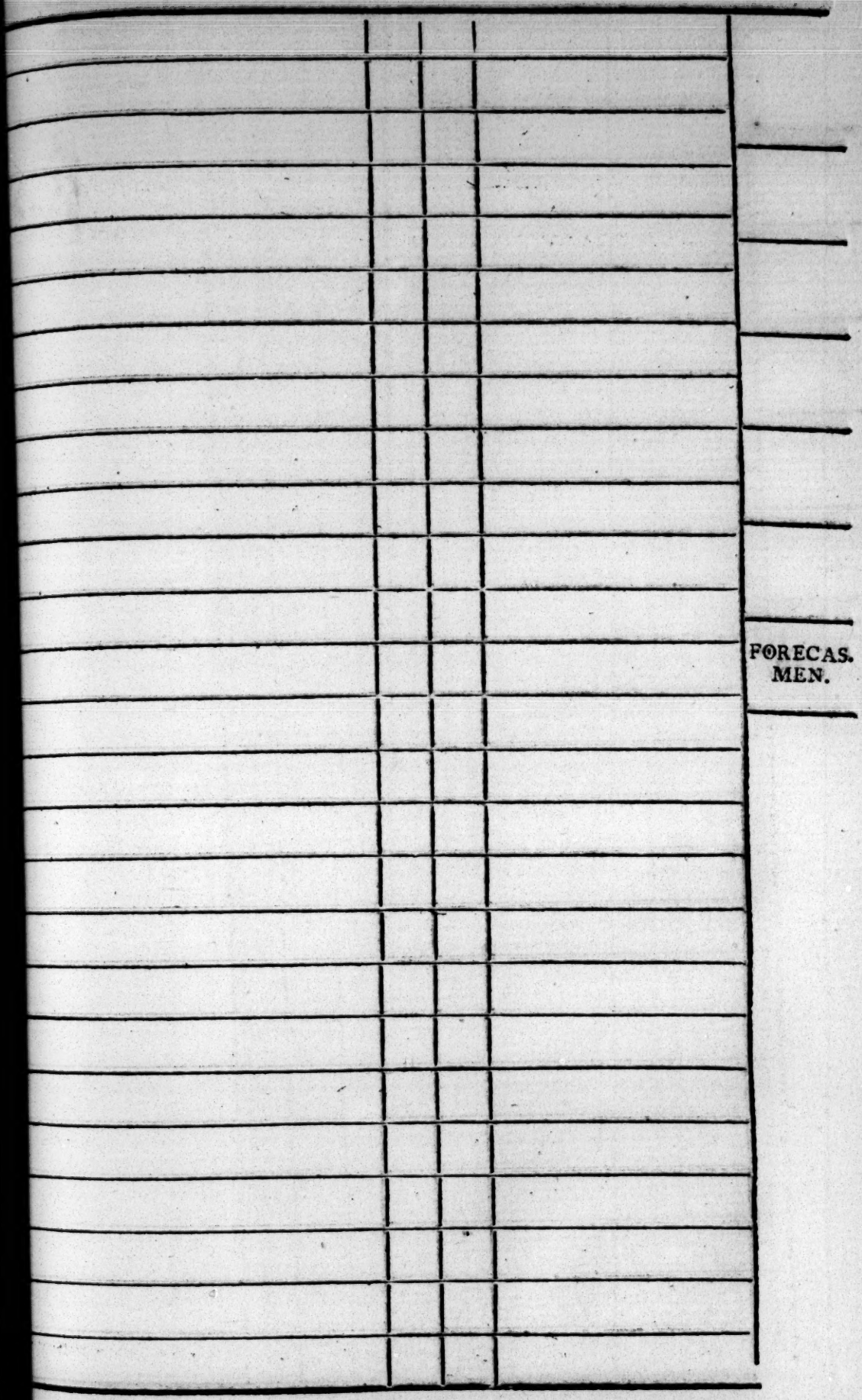
CREW.

CARPENT
CREW.

FORECAS. MEN.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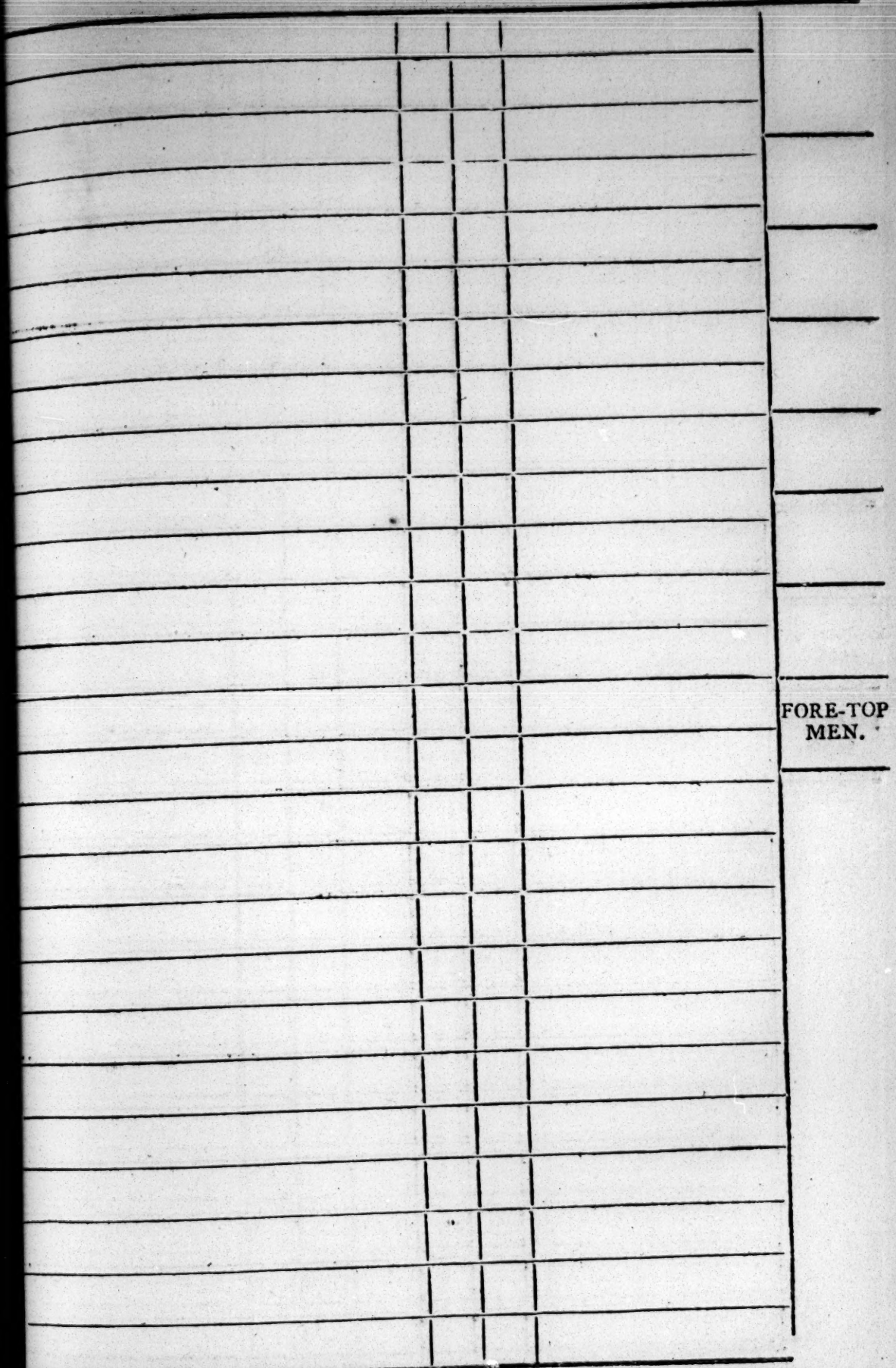
FORE-TOP MEN.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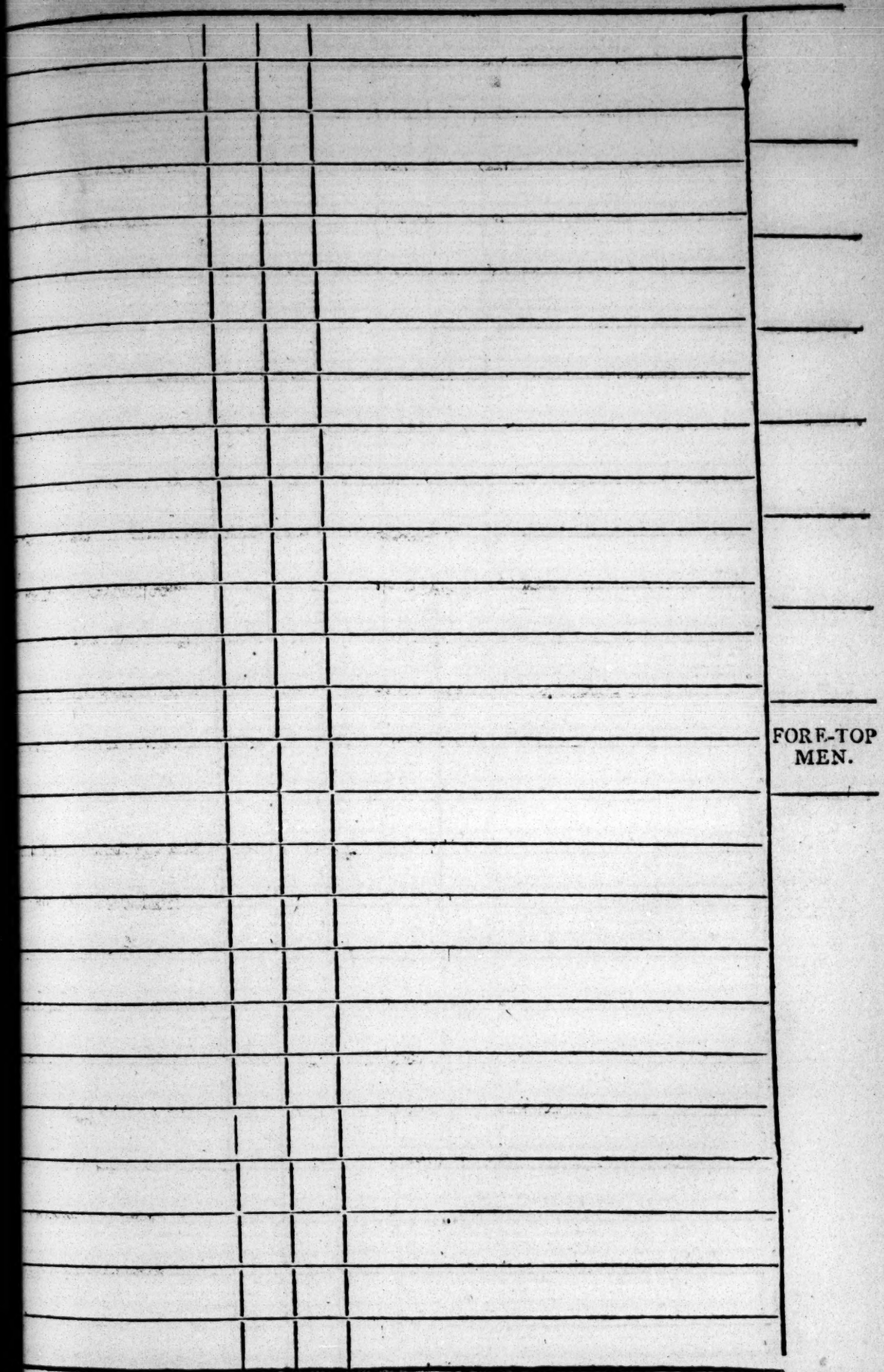
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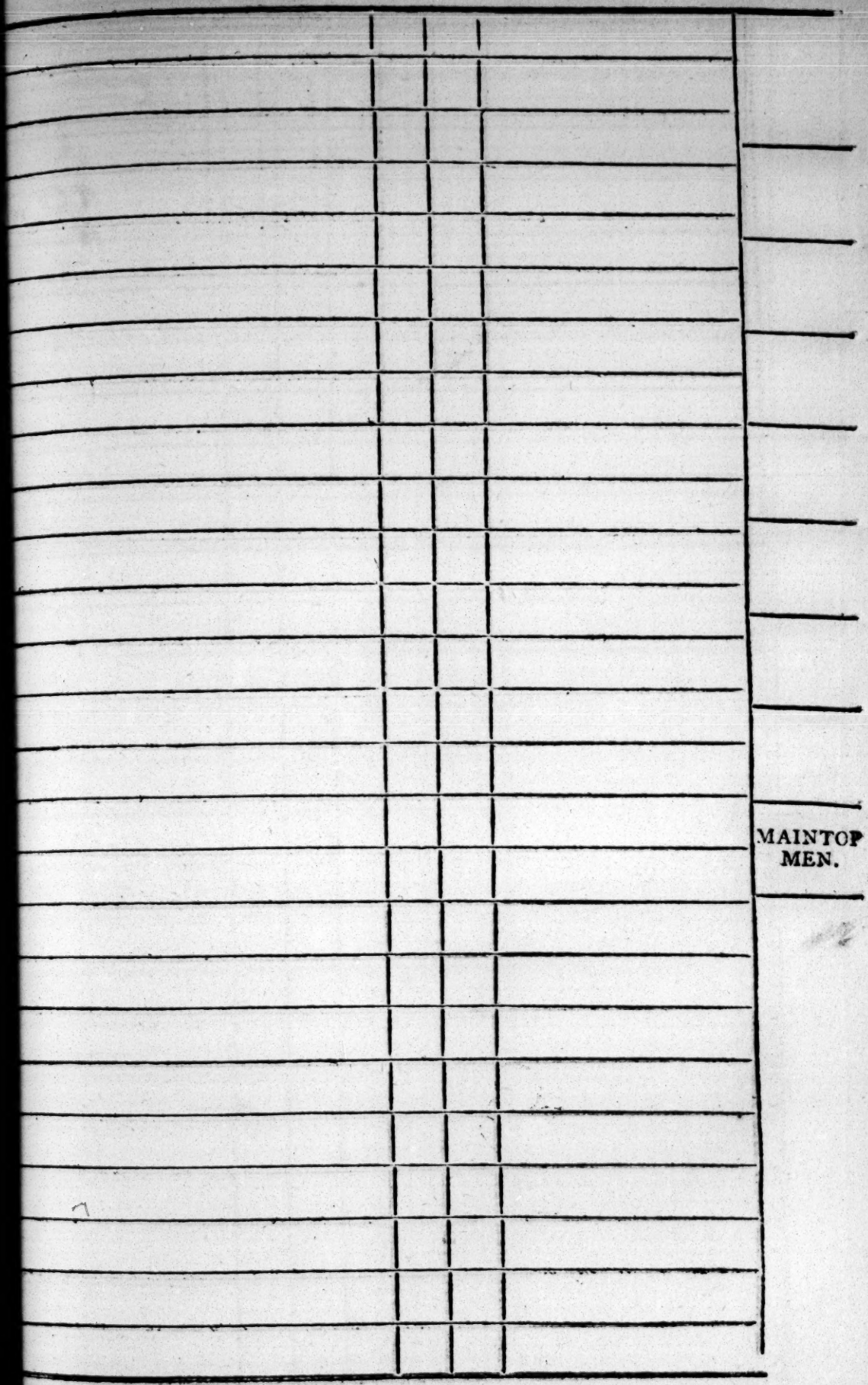
MAINTOP MEN.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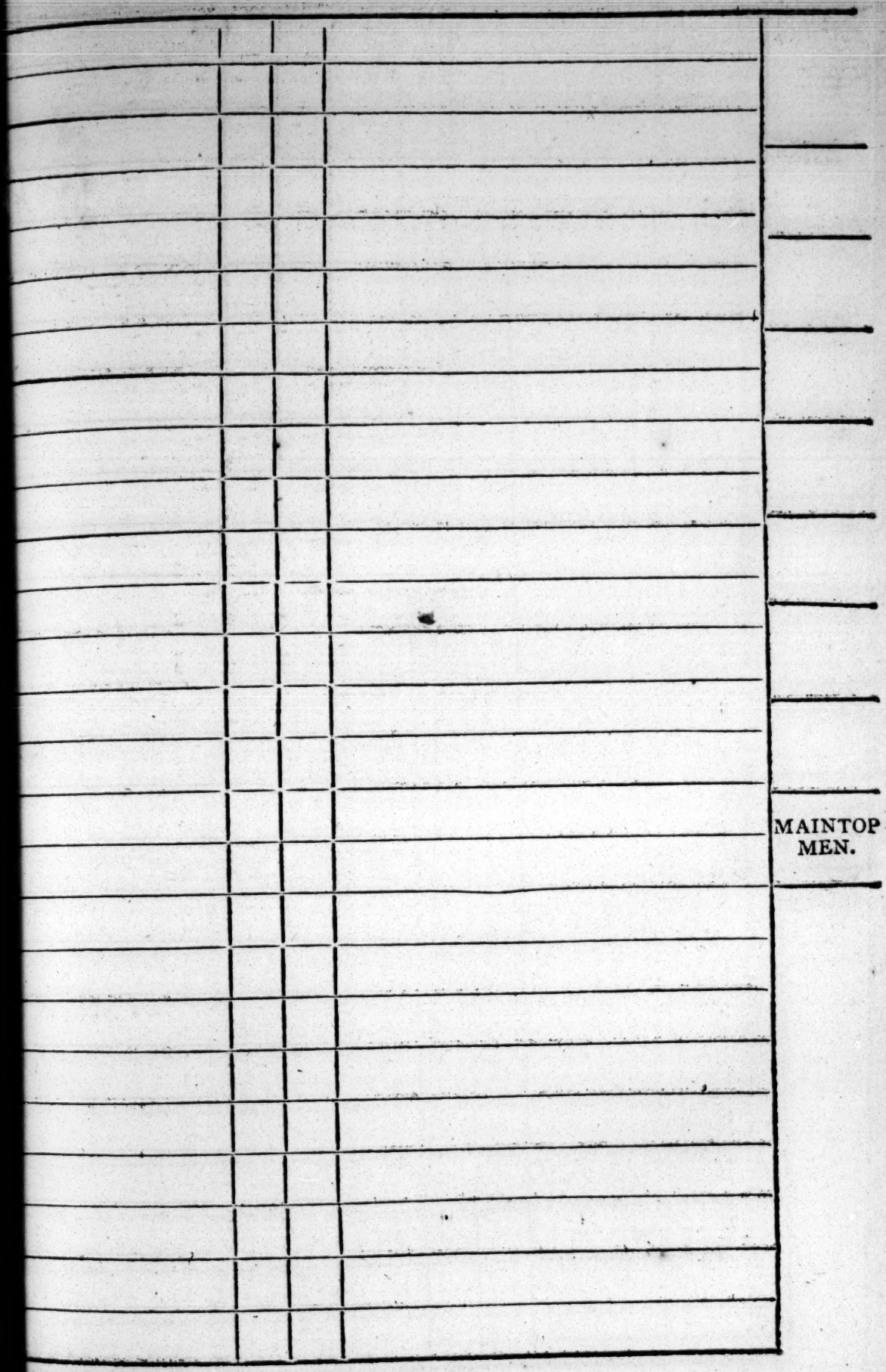
MAINTOP
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MIZEN-T. MEN.

MIZEN-T. MEN.

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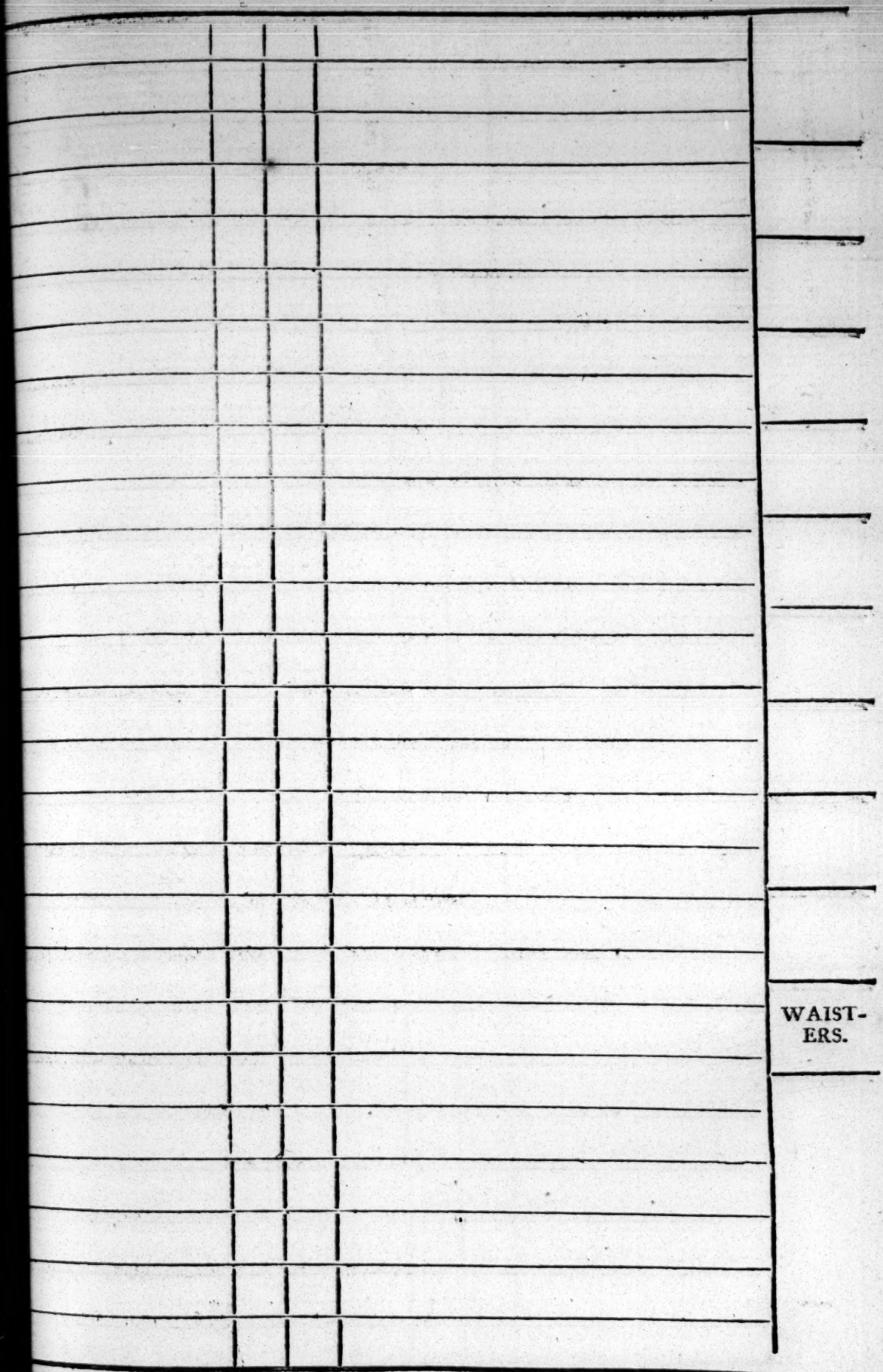
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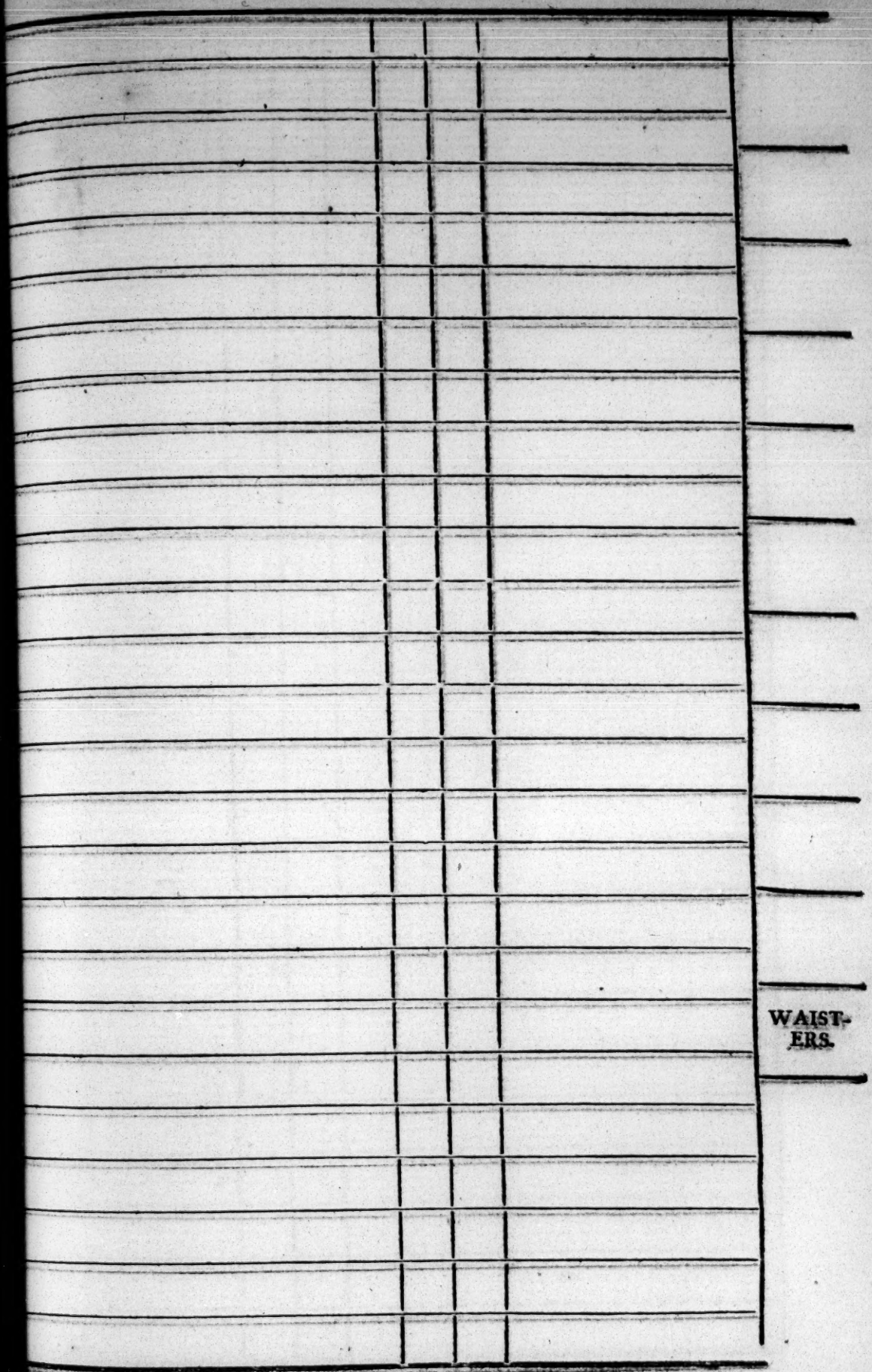
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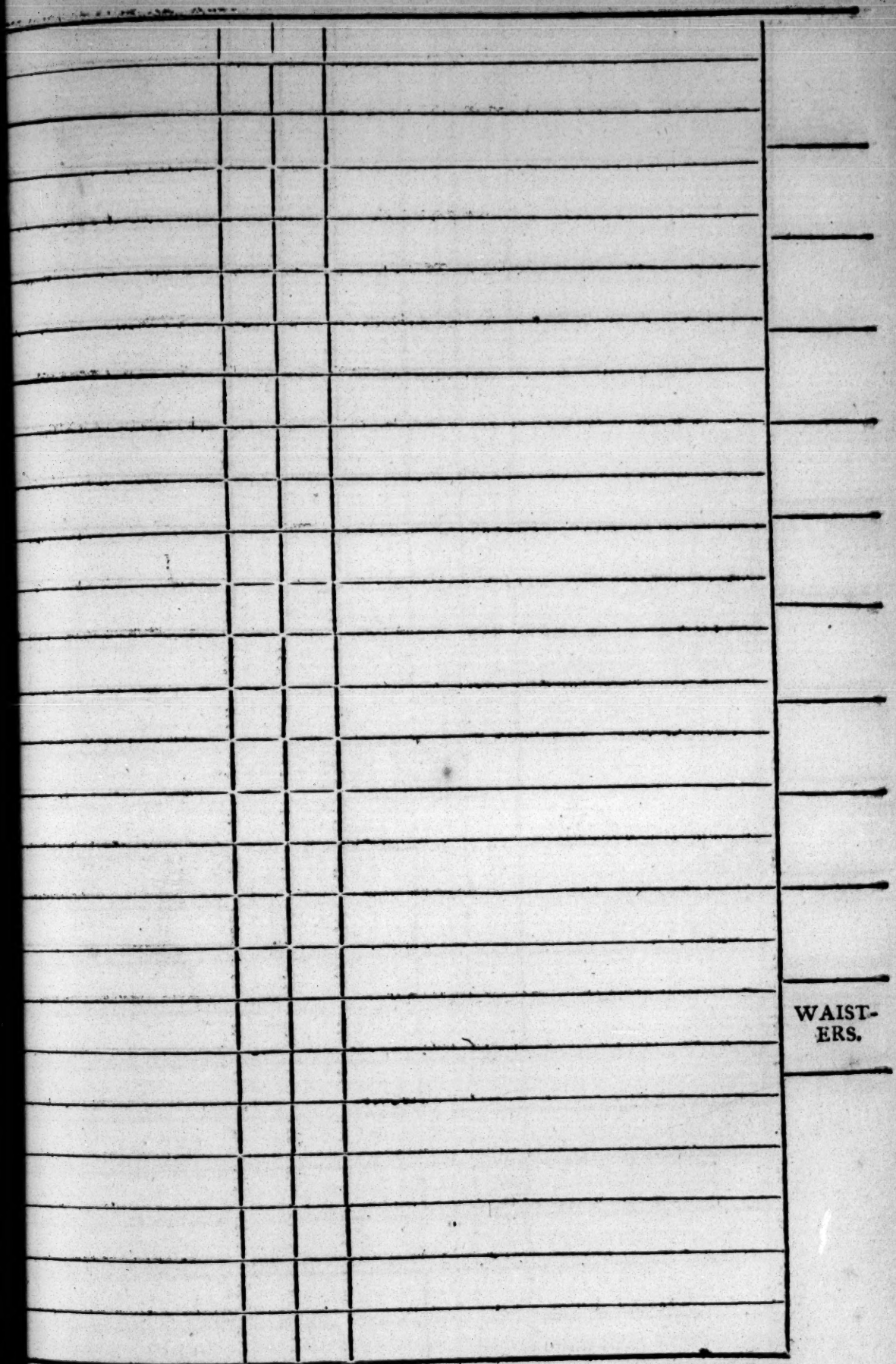
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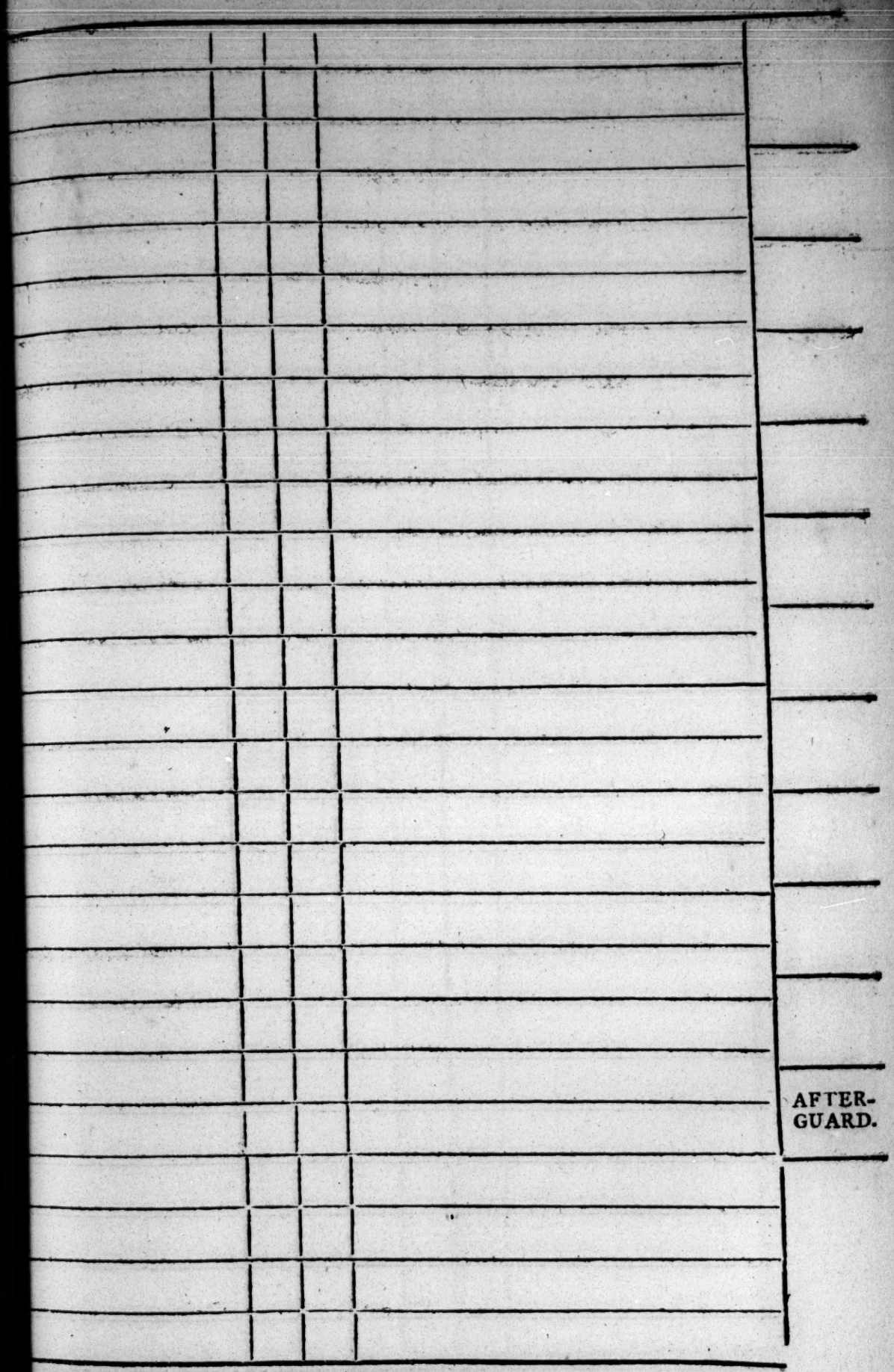
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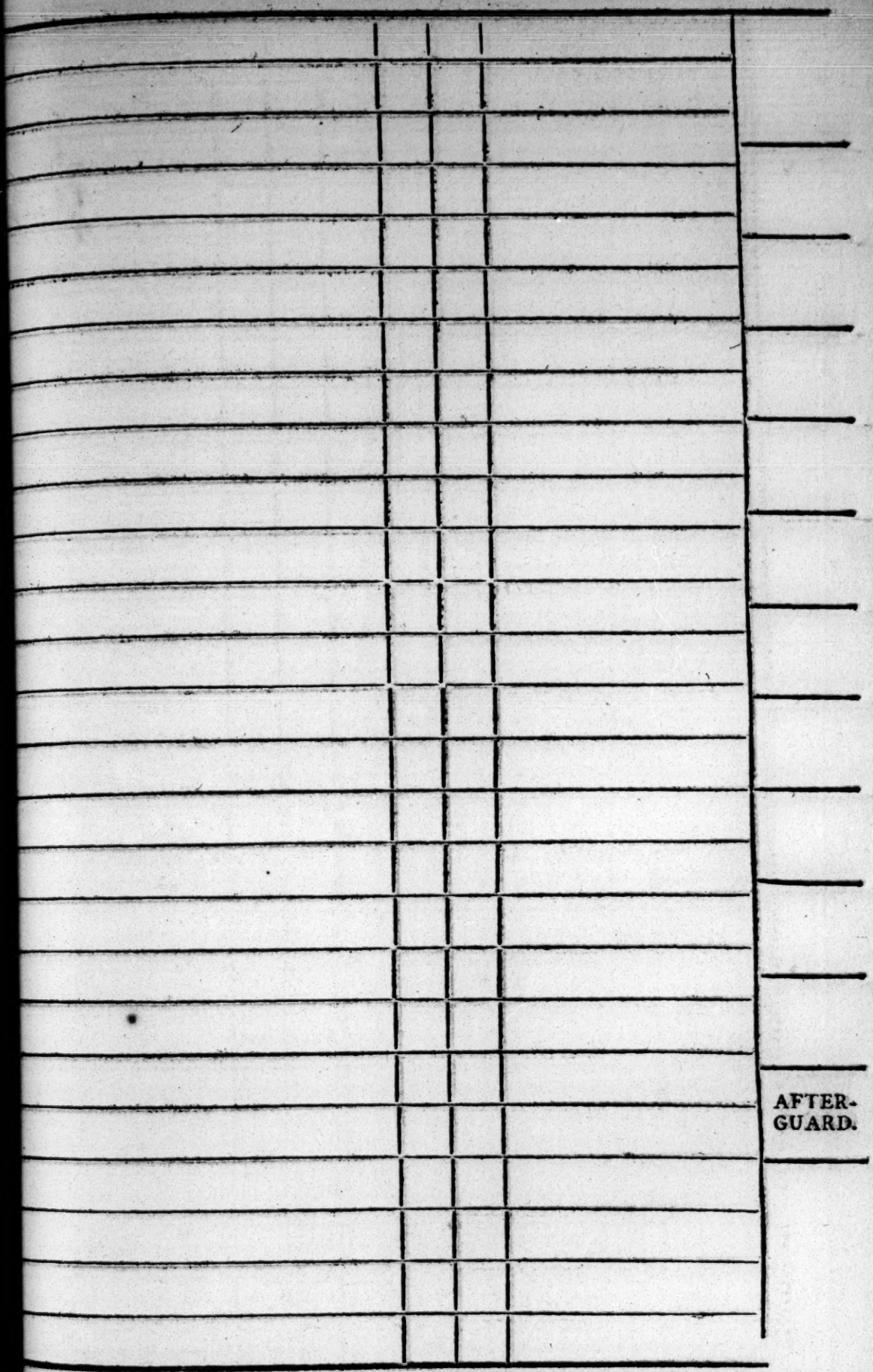
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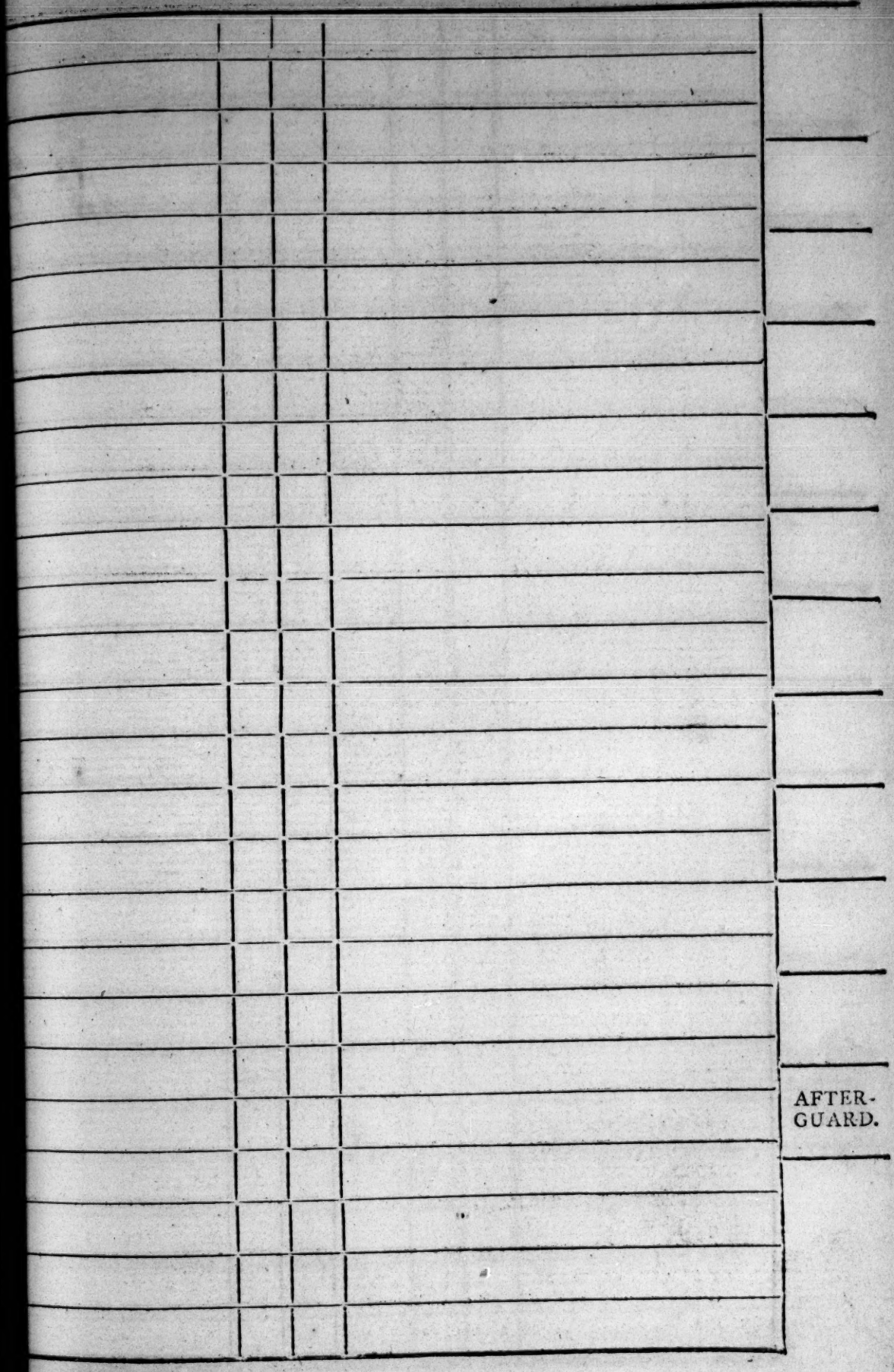
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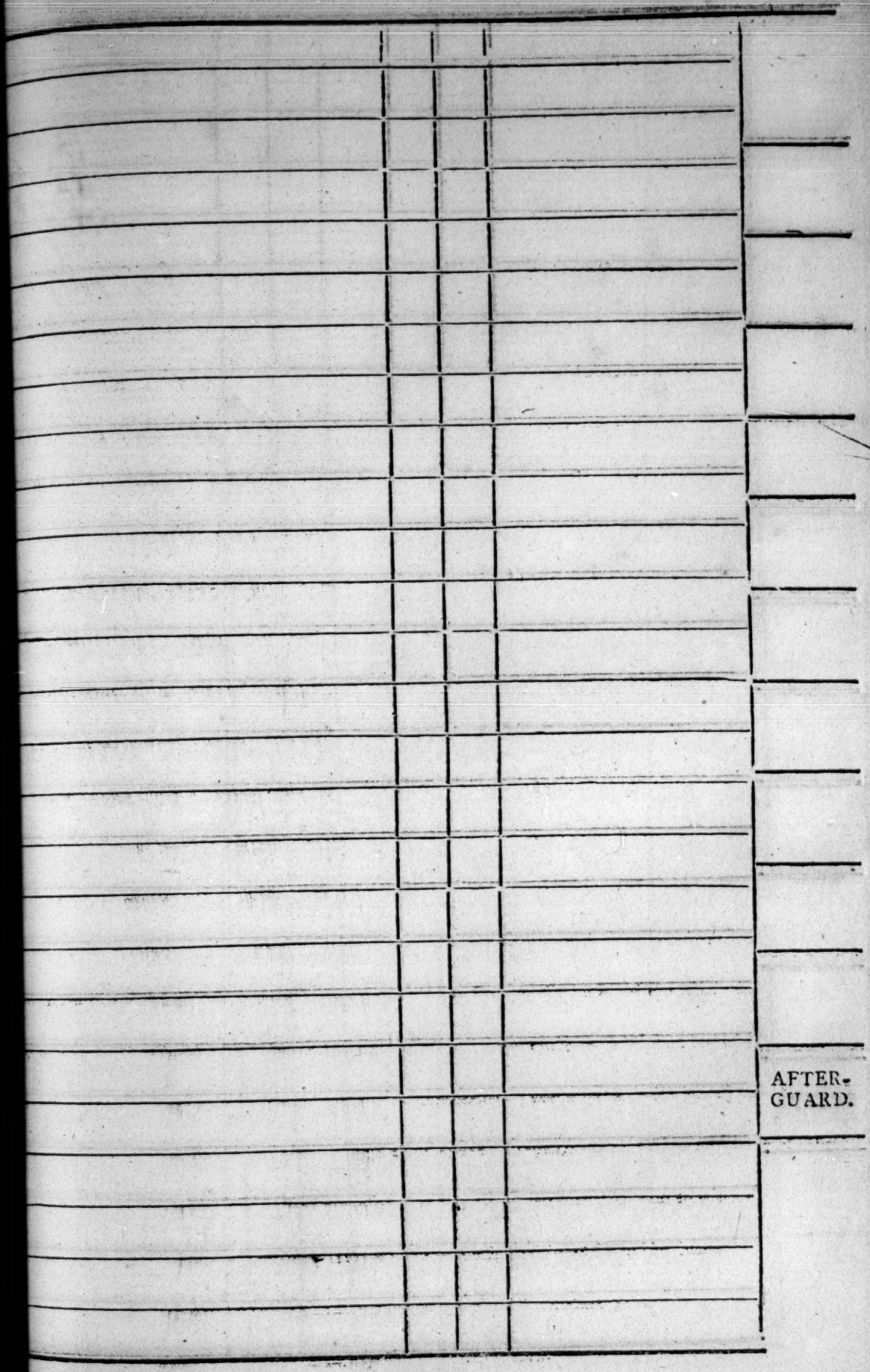
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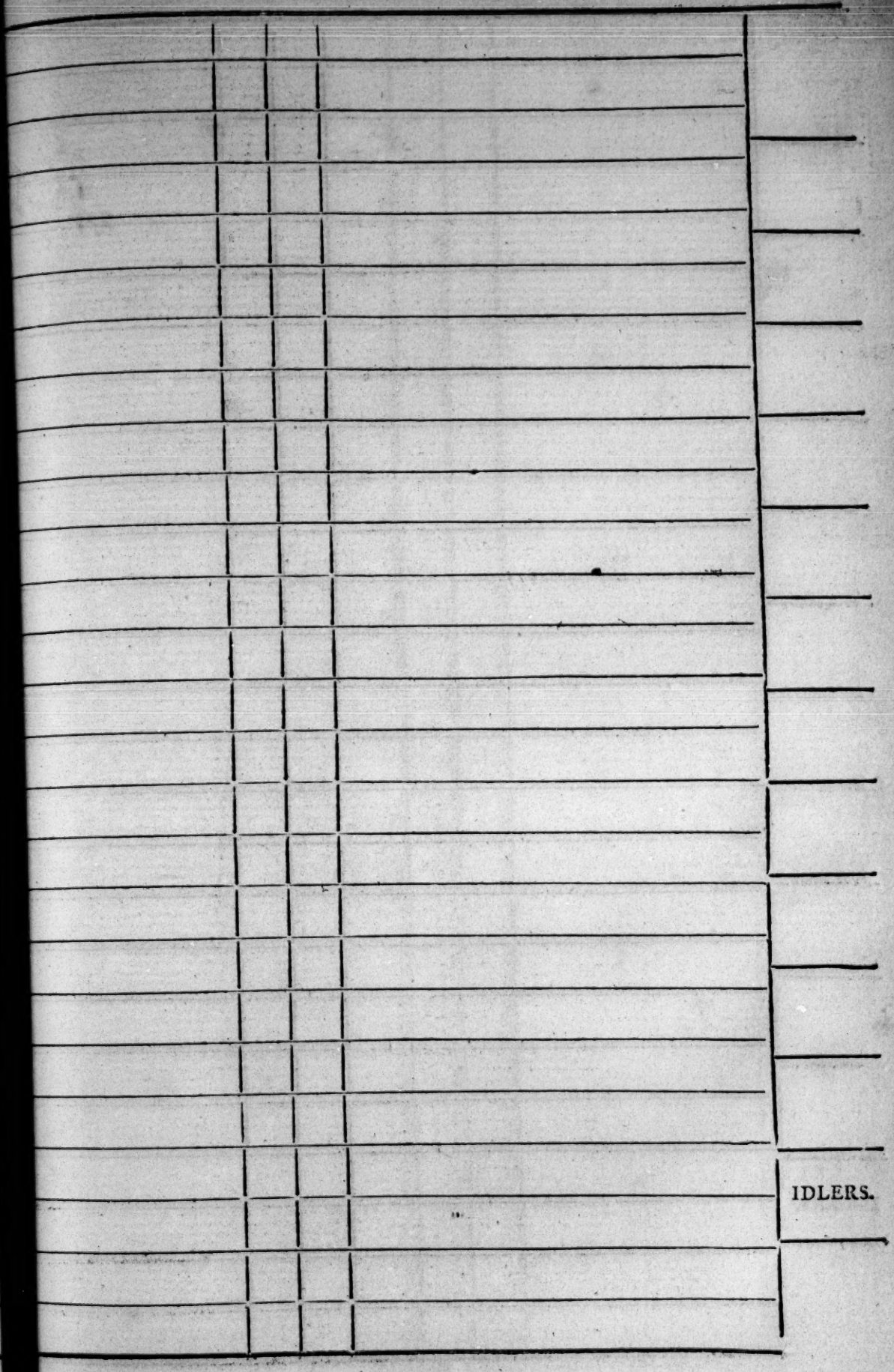
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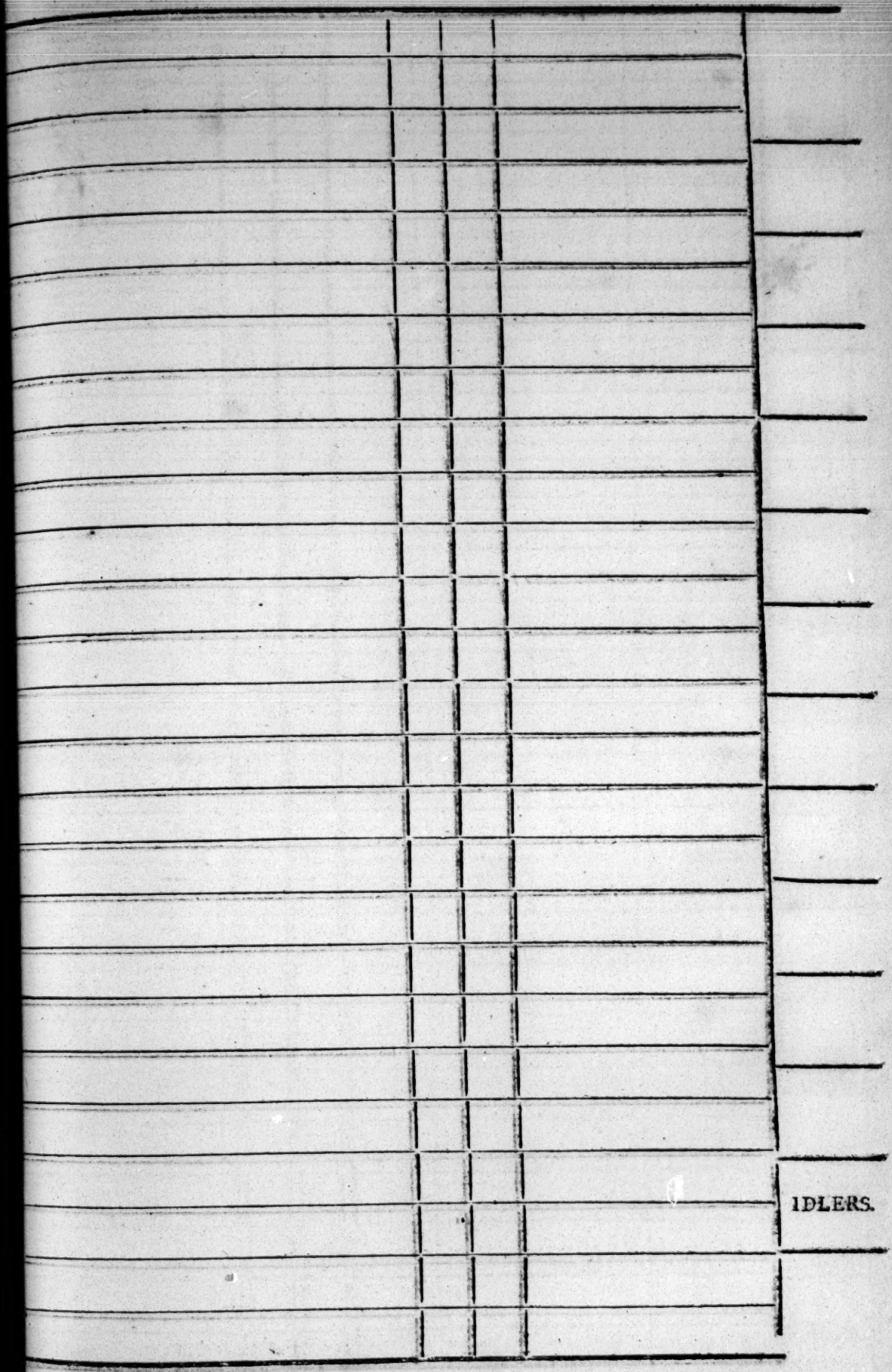
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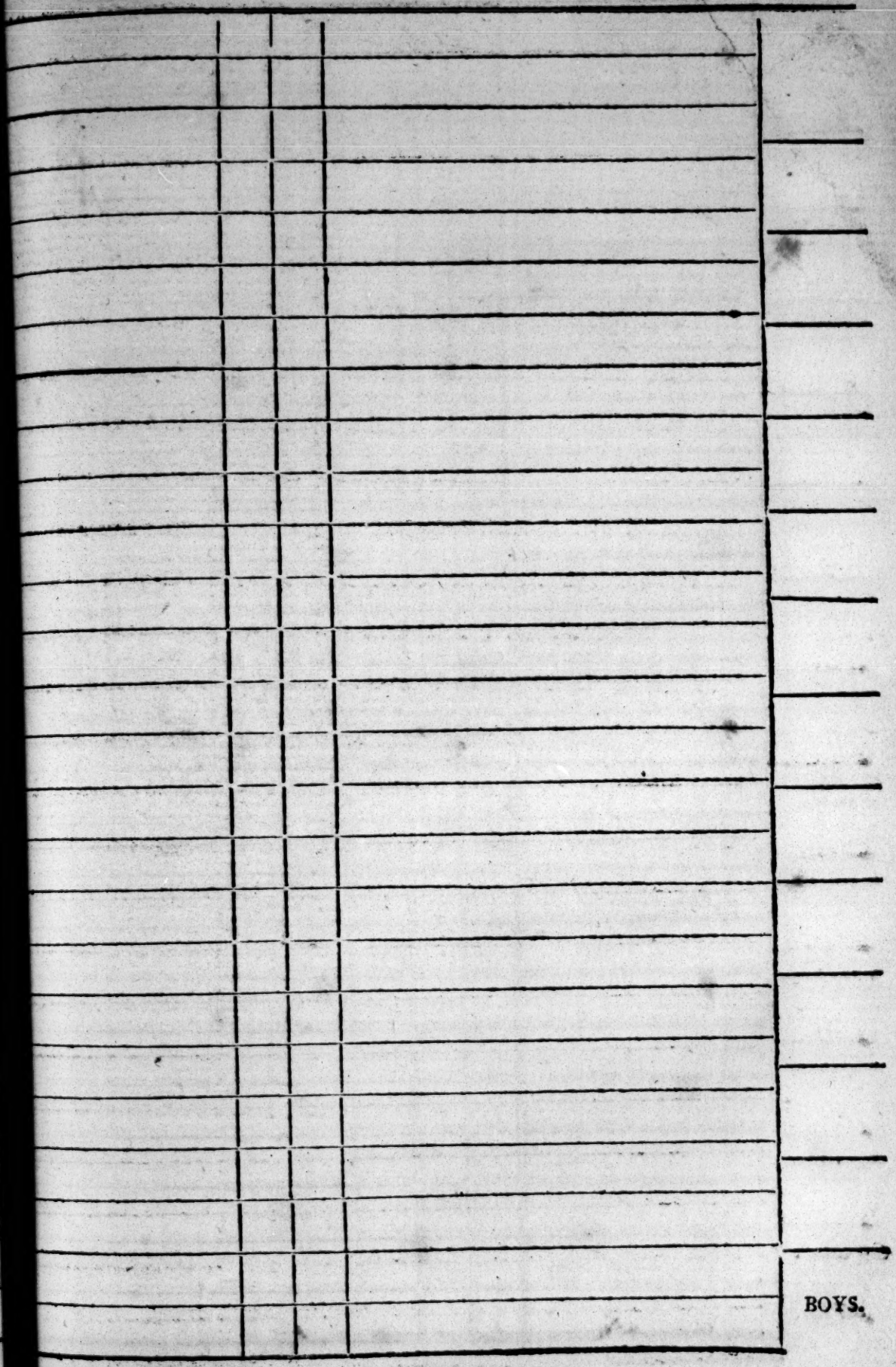
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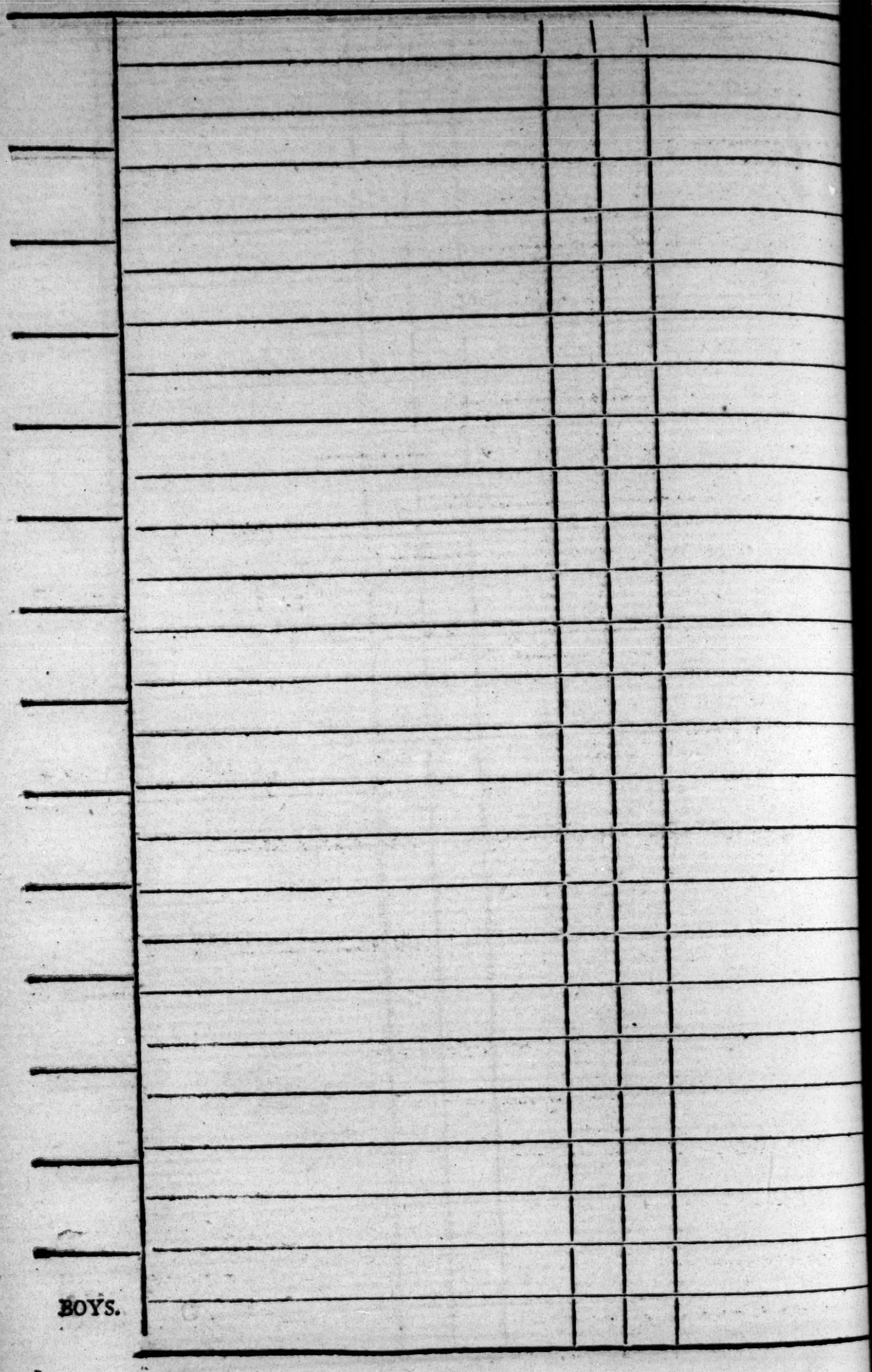
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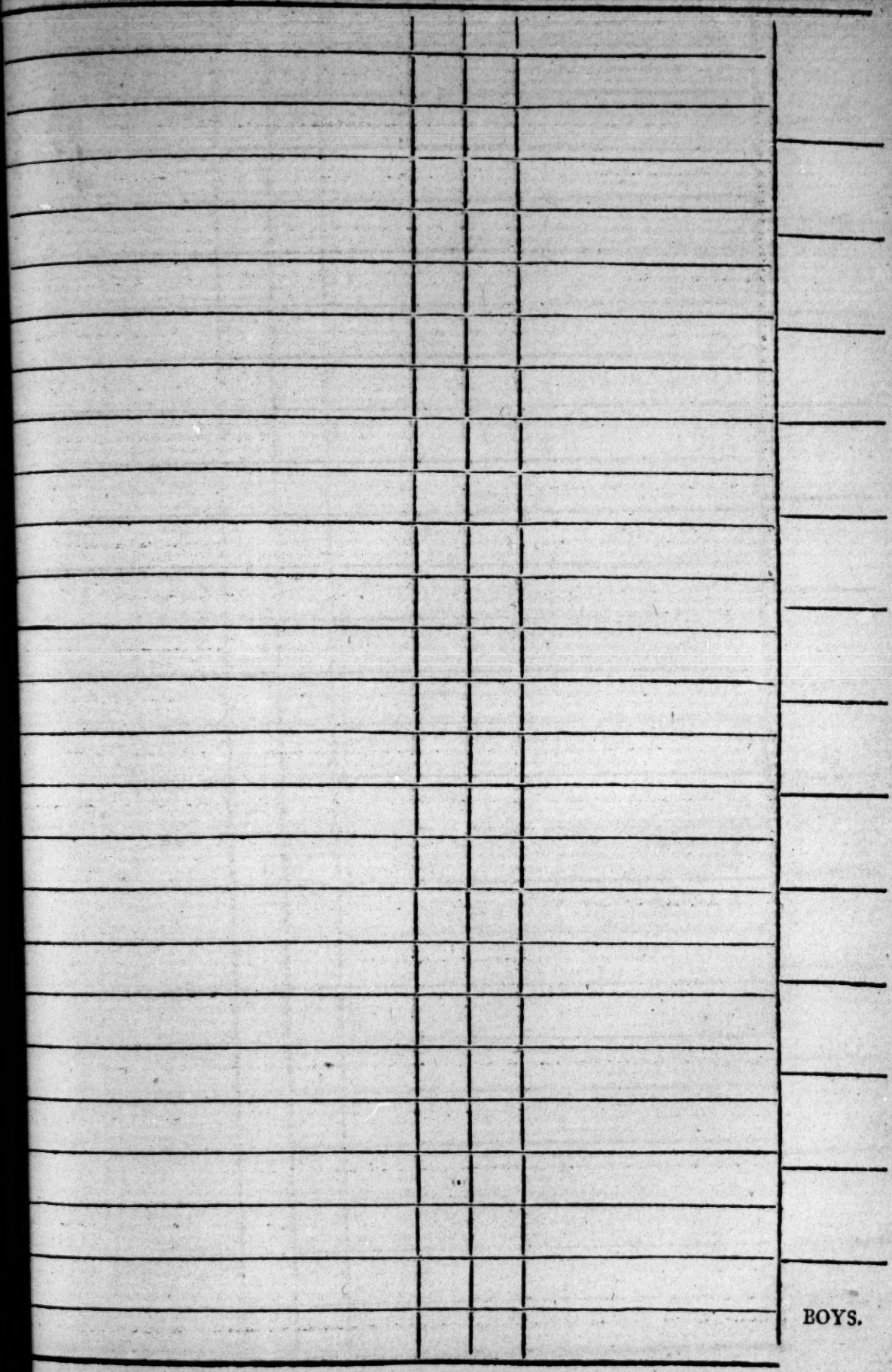

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